NEW STAR WARS EXCLUSIVE: Jedi + Sith = Jensaarai

POLY POLY

Living GREYHAWK Journal
The Blinding Sands of the Bright Lands

Down with the Drow!
Introducing Downer

Polyhedron 157

RPGA NETWORK

d20 system

Gun-Fu Fighting

Kunoichi of **The Kage**

What's All This, Then?

You're holding the first monthly issue of *Dungeon/Polyhedron Magazine*. When we merged with *Dungeon* more than a year ago, we were excited about sharing the latest d20 System and RPGA news with a wider variety of readers. We invented the concept of the d20 Mini-Game to test out new spins on the familiar d20 game engine, prettied up and modified to run with a variety of nonstandard genres. We got RPGA bigwig Ian Richards to write a regular column for us, updating readers on the newest developments with the largest organization of tabletop roleplayers in the world. We grabbed our buddy Stan! and had him create *Bolt & Quiver*, a cartoon we hoped would strike a fire with readers.

Then, we stood back and waited.

For the most part, your reactions were very encouraging. Response to the Mini-Games in particular has been phenomenal. Readers sent letters every month asking for more Mini-Games, more support for the Mini-Games we've already published, and more coverage and support of other d20 System and Open Game License games already on the market.

That caused a bit of a problem. The average *Polyhedron* Mini-Game runs about 40–60 pages. The games themselves take up most of the issues in which they appear, leaving little room for industry news, coverage of games like the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, *d20 Modern*, or games by other publishers.

We at the magazine wanted to provide that extra content. The readers definitely wanted (even demanded, in some cases) that content. But we didn't have the pages.

Enter maverick publisher Johnny Wilson. Johnny, you see, had a plan.

Johnny's idea, totally unrelated to our page paucity plight, was to transform *Dungeon/Polyhedron* into a monthly magazine. 100 pages. The first month, 60 pages would go to the *Dungeon* side and 40 would be dedicated to *Polyhedron*. The next month, that ratio would be flipped, with *Polyhedron* moving into pole position.

After *Dungeon* Editor Chris Thomasson and I stopped desperately shrieking and flailing around Johnny's office for a week or two, we came to see his cunning plan as brilliance in the disguise of lunacy. Increasing the magazine's frequency would get *Dungeon* adventures into the hands of DMs more frequently, and would allow us to stay on top of the always-developing d20 industry.

It also solved the problem of how to support our existing Mini-Games and how to incorporate a wider array of topics and articles in *Polyhedron*.

So there you have it. When *Poly's* in the 60-page pole position you'll receive a complete Mini-Game augmented by the usual news and support features you've come to expect (and we hope appreciate) from *Polyhedron*. In the shorter months (like this one, for example), we'll include support for games like *d20 Modern* and *Star Wars*, and we'll also revisit old Mini-Games like *Pulp Heroes* and *V for Victory*, adding or expanding upon those games with additional material you can drop instantly into your campaigns.

We've also come up with a few more interesting surprises. Our RPGA readers will want to keep an eye out for the *Living Greyhawk Journal*, previously found in *Dragon Magazine*. The *Journal* provides all the rules and news you need to play the world's biggest D&D campaign, and often comes with an article or articles expanding the legendary World of Greyhawk.

Lastly, this issue sees the birth of a new *Polyhedron* cartoon, *Downer*, by Art Director Kyle Hunter. *Downer* has a lot to say about the type of worlds we gamers know, love, and occasionally groan at, so we've given him a monthly outlet for his observations and misadventures.

Trust me, there will be hijinx aplenty.

Which is nice, because *Hijinx* is the name of our next Mini-Game, a rock-and-roll cartoon crime-solving extravaganza in the spirit of *Jabberjaw*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, and the *Gorillaz*. No kidding.

See you in 30!

ERIK

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!

QUIVER, WOULD YOU SAY I'M MORE LIKE A WINTER STORM OR A SPRING SHOWER?
WHAT IN PELOR'S NAME ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M TAKING A SUBTLE AND COMPLEX PERSONALITY TEST TO DETERMINE WHAT CAREER PATH IS RIGHT FOR ME.
WHAT PC ARE YOU?
QUESTION 8: IF A GIANT SUDDENLY ATTACKED, WOULD YOU:
A-CAST A SPELL
B-PRAY FIERCELY
C-HIDE IN SHADOWS
D-PULL OUT A WEAPON AND SMASH IT TILL IT STOPS TWITCHING
OH YEAH... THAT'S SUBTLE
AND COMPLEX!
Stan!

The Polyhedron Interview

The Game Mechanics

A few months ago, Wizards of the Coast laid off several members of its RPG R&D department as part of across-the-board cost-saving measures that touched most divisions of the company. Rather than look at the development as a defeat, however, a handful of displaced staffers banded together to form a new d20 design studio, The Game Mechanics.

We recently sat down with The Game Mechanics President JD Wiker (*Star Wars Roleplaying Game*), Vice President and General Manager Rich Redman (*GeneTech*, *d20 Modern*, *Savage Species*), Creative Director Stan! (*Bolt & Quiver*, *d20 Modern*), and Secretary/"Web Guy" Marc Schmalz to discuss the company's origins and where it's headed.

POLY: How'd you come together?
Redman: Stan! and I and JD got laid off in that order on the same morning. The three of us ended up in exactly the same outplacement seminar, which was supposed to teach you how to write your resumé and how to do interviews and goal assessment and all this other stuff. We were in there for two days, with Jeff Grubb and Peter Kim and a bunch of really good people from Wizards. JD looked around and looked at all the talent that was in the room and said "we should start our own game company." Stan! and I immediately agreed that that was a good idea.

POLY: What makes your company stand out in an overcrowded marketplace?
Schmalz: What it boils down to is that if someone buys a Game Mechanics product, they are buying a game from the people who wrote the base game. Rich has a [3.5] *Dungeon Master's Guide* credit. Stan! co-designed *d20 Modern* and *Urban Arcana*. If you buy a product from us, you already own products by these guys.

POLY: What's the Game Mechanics approach to game design?
Wiker: I hunt for ideas I think players would like to see, and then I translate those ideas to rules. *Swords of Our Fathers*, our first product, is really a good example. The idea came about because we realized that swords in fantasy literature are like "oh, this is my sword, I've carried it since I was four." In D&D, you just don't see that. Swords are a tradable commodity. You get it, you use it for a while, you find a better one and then you sell the old one. *Huh?* That's not the fantasy literature I read. Where's *Stormbringer?* Where's *Excalibur?* Where's *Glamdring?* They're not there, right? And so I said "let's do something to make it so that people can do that sort of story, so they have that sword that their father gave them." "*Swords of Our Fathers*." That's the whole idea behind it.

POLY: What else is in the hopper?
Redman: *Staves of Ascendance* is the second book in the *Scion Series*, which started with *Swords of Our Fathers*. It follows a lot of the same reasoning as that book in that magic staves are disposable items in D&D. You get 'em, you use 'em 'til your 50 charges are gone. In some ways they're less efficient than wands.

Stan!: I'm working on a product called the *Modern Player's Companion*. It's basically character stuff for players of *d20 Modern*. New occupations, new feats, new advanced classes. We're going to have occupations like bohemian, educator, and tribal. There's going to be an advanced class that deals with long range, more along the lines of sniper, sharpshooter material.

Wiker: We're going to [publish] pdfs for the foreseeable future, partly because printing is something we just don't have any experience with. It's going to be expensive, and we don't want to have a huge outlay of cash to put another product on the shelves when the shelves are very, very crowded. That being the case, we're hoping to someday share that space, possibly in a position of prominence.

Visit The Game Mechanics at www.thegamemechanics.com

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d20 system

RPG OBJECTS

News from the Top

Winter Fantasy 2003

RPGA NETWORK

Experienced national convention-goers know to plan wisely for an RPG con, since there's usually so many interesting seminars or cool booths in the dealer hall that it's pretty easy to forget that the whole point of the convention is playing games. At WINTER FANTASY, the focus is squarely on RPGA gaming, with numerous special LIVING campaign events, "classic" characters-provided tournaments, live-action interactives, and activity centers where players can update their LIVING campaign characters.

This year's WINTER FANTASY, which took place January 23–26 at the Ft. Wayne Convention Center in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, offered a chance for RPGA friends from around the country and the world to gather for four days of slaying dragons, killing dark elves, and sharing good times and great memories.

Before the show, players had a chance to play some regional LIVING GREYHAWK scenarios at a "Verbobonc Madness" pre-convention event hosted by the local LIVING GREYHAWK Triad. A special Thursday-morning seminar gave judges the first-ever sneak peek at the new "3.5" DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules revision, set for a July release. Guest of Honor Andy Collins and a host of Wizards of the Coast business folk gave gamers the skinny on the new rules and revealed never-before-seen art of the mummy lord (from the new *Monster Manual*) and the arcane theurge (from the new *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The network kicked things up a notch in the appearance department this year. Attendees entered the main convention hall to the sight of dozens of huge banners featuring D&D art and familiar LIVING campaign logos hanging from the walls and ceiling. One special event, the LIVING GREYHAWK *Assault on the Vault*, involved huge miniature-scale dioramas of Dwarven Forge Master Maze resin dungeon walls and floors. During every slot of the convention, nervous gamers sat (or stood) around these tables, hoping beyond hope that their characters would make it out of the infamous Vault of the Drow alive (most of them did).

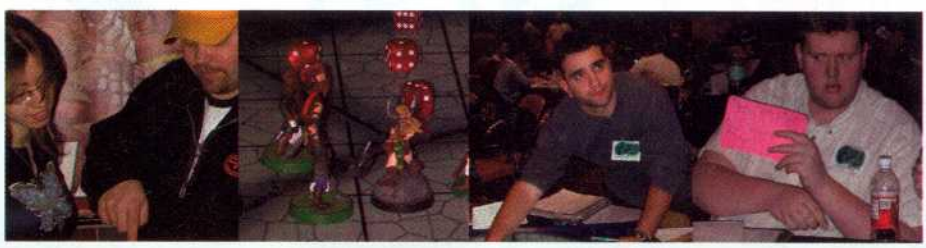
The Network's LIVING FORCE campaign drew high numbers, with many gamers flocking to the interactive, where players celebrated the life of a beloved inhabitant of the Cularin system. Those who missed the show can keep up with the progressing storyline by ordering the *Forces of Cularin* trilogy from RPGA HQ.

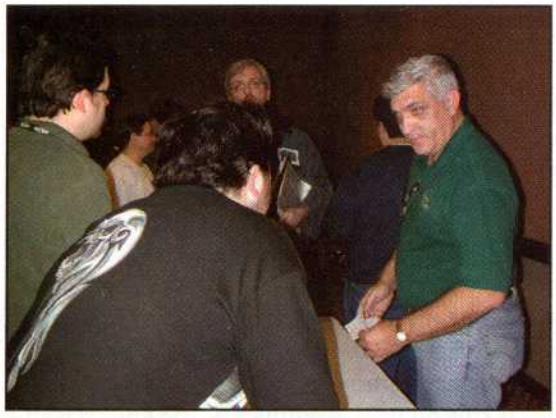
The venerable LIVING CITY campaign entered a new era with the debut of *Ruins of Ravens Bluff*, a new campaign with all new characters. The LC campaign has seen numerous huge-scale changes over the last year, some of which we'll cover here in the near future.

The biggest surprise of the show might have been the overwhelming popularity of the LIVING ARCANIS campaign. Set in the homeworld of d20 System publisher Paradigm Concepts, LIVING ARCANIS has been growing steadily over the last year, and is starting to look like one of the major LIVING campaigns. The campaign's Friday night "battle interactive" (see next page) hosted more than 100 gamers over six hours.

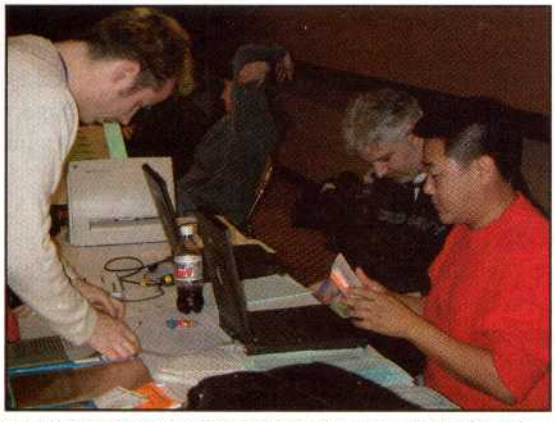
All in all, WINTER FANTASY was a huge success, with hundreds of gamers sharing good times and great combats. We hope to see you there next year!

—ERIK MONA

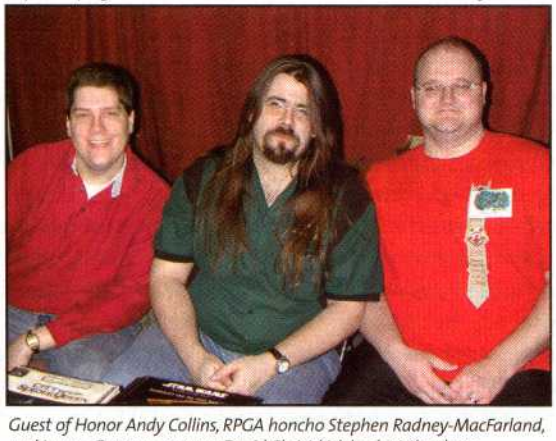




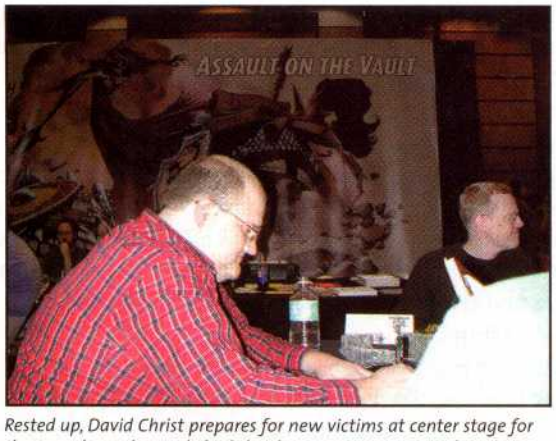
Paradigm Concepts president Henry Lopez leads the troops in the Living Arcanis Battle Interactive.



Living City president and game industry swami Ryan Dancey (center) helps campaign coordinator Hohn Cho at the Living City activity center.



Guest of Honor Andy Collins, RPGA honcho Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Living Greyhawk muse David Christ kick back at the show.



Rested up, David Christ prepares for new victims at center stage for the Assault on the Vault *high-level Living Greyhawk Delve.*

Living Arcanis
THE WORLD OF SHATTERED EMPIRES™

The Battle Interactive

The Battle of Semar was an exclusive event run by the Living Arcanis campaign for Winter Fantasy 2003. The battle interactive gave Living Arcanis players a chance to determine the outcome of the battle depicted in the cover art of the *Codex Arcanis* campaign guide. The players fought together as part of a multinational force known as "The Shining Patrol." The evil Ssethregoran Empire provided their opposition.

The interactive was a 6-hour event divided into several elements including combat, roleplaying, and decision-making. The combat elements were challenging, with player decisions affecting the outcomes more often than brute force. Some missions included rescuing helpless townfolk, finding lost supplies, and capturing key terrain for future use. The results of each combat element were tallied during roleplaying interludes where the players could mingle, "in character," with other players and pick up useful information, healing, or equipment. Depending on mission outcomes, some players also used this time to find new adventuring parties or to form new tables. After each interlude, the players returned to their standard-sized tables and began a new series of challenges. The challenge difficulties were heavily influenced by the results of previous missions. This interactive was unique in that individual players could have a completely different experience based on their decisions and mission outcomes.

The turnout for the event was nearly overwhelming. Despite setting a limit on ticket sales to 120, the event was over-sold, requiring more tables, more room, and more staff. Thanks to the helpful, hard-working people manning RPGA HQ, things were fixed in short order and the interactive grew to accommodate everyone. The interactive began with more than 21 full-sized RPGA-sanctioned tables, and despite some attrition, finished with more than 20.

Some of the highlights of the interactive included having more than 20 players volunteer for a suicide mission designed for 6 and raising more than $2,200 for the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation.

At the end of the battle, the players carried the day by a total of 12 to 8. Evil was narrowly thwarted...until next time.—Derrel Weaver

The Kage

By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Atilla Adorjany

Few would argue that the proud warrior traditions of Japan have ever fully left the blood of its people. Although Western culture has been fascinated at times with tales of the Land of the Rising Sun's feudal warriors, few know that such warriors exist even today. One such group, the Kage, remain as talented and dangerous as their ancestors, reminding the modern world that Eastern warriors are among the most deadly.

The Kage (pronounced kog-A) began as a group of assassins working for the Yakuza, Japan's brutal mafia. The group's membership has changed repeatedly over the years, both as a result of casualties and advancement of its members into other areas of the crime syndicate. The strikeforce currently consists of six members who have expanded their operations beyond the missions they perform for the Yakuza. Although still technically a branch of the Yakuza syndicate, the Kage have worked for a variety of fringe organizations as mercenaries, and their current roster brings with it a variety of skills and talents that make the group far more than merely paid killers. In recent years, the Kage have been linked to the American and Russian mafias, South American rebels, ex-Soviet warlords, and even a few powerful "legitimate" businessmen in the United States. Their operations have been tracked everywhere from Africa to Afghanistan, though never in time for the authorities to capture them.

The Kage embody the concept of a self-contained fighting force. Although several members have their specialties, each one is a deadly combatant and able to function completely independently of their fellows. Notoriously paranoid about dealing with *gaijin* (foreigners), members typically arrange their contracts through the Yakuza in order to assure reliability.

When not on assignment for the Yakuza, to whom they hold their highest allegiance, they work to hone their skills and spread their parent organization's influence across the globe. With the nearly limitless resources of the Yakuza and all the advanced technology that the Japanese tech industry has to offer at their disposal, the Kage are almost always one step ahead of their targets. When not on assignment, each agent attends to personal matters around the globe. With no distinctive uniform or identifying marks unique to the group, any single member of the Kage would not be immediately linked to the group as a whole, though most government agencies would likely suspect Yakuza involvement given the members' numerous tattoos.

The Kage admits members by invitation only, which they occasionally grant to promising young Yakuza. After one to two years of intensive training, the recruit becomes an active member of the organization and begins taking on field assignments. The Kage screen each recruit for loyalty, dedication, physical and mental prowess, and inherent talent that makes a candidate a unique addition to the team. Each member of the team is given a codename of their choosing, usually something that describes their particular specialties or heritage, and then becomes a member of an elite combat unit trained in deadly Japanese combat traditions.

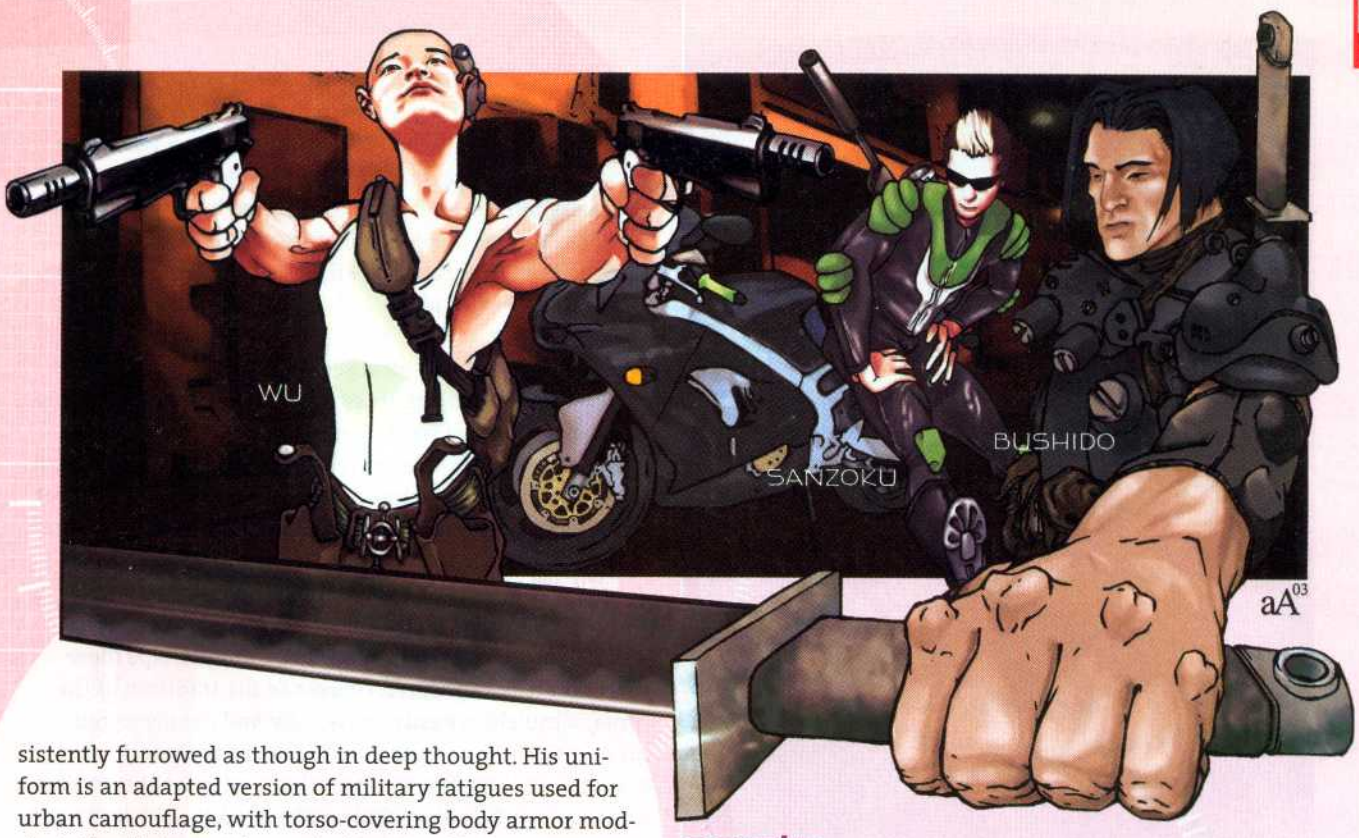
Bushido

Likely the most recognizable member of the Kage, the agent known as Bushido serves as the group's field commander and tactician. A formidable warrior trained in a variety of martial arts styles and sword fighting techniques, Bushido often is the first into battle and is known for an uncharacteristic savagery that seems out of place for the usually frosty mercenary. Cold and calculating when not engaged in combat, Bushido is a no-nonsense leader with an eye for the weaknesses of others. Certain leaders in the Yakuza, and even a former member of the Kage, have admitted that when Bushido's ash-gray eyes lingered on them too long it felt as though they were being weighed, measured, and judged.

Bushido was the orphaned son of a Japanese businessman and his wife who were murdered by Yakuza agents for refusal to pay a tithe to the crime syndicate. Raised as a foster son by one of the top Yakuza crime lords, Bushido quickly found his calling as a student of martial arts. A black belt by age 13 and a sensei at 18, Bushido remained an outcast due to what some saw as brutal training methods and unattainable expectations for his students. Already working for his adopted father from time to time, he was tapped by the then-leader of the Kage for training.

After serving with the group for six years, Bushido assumed leadership of the team and began a streak of victories that impressed his leaders as much as they frightened his enemies. Bushido is one of the most successful team leaders the Kage have ever had, which some chalk up to his absolutely ruthless efficiency; driven by some icy motivation, Bushido focuses on the mission at hand and lets neither mercy nor indecision slow his team's efforts.

Bushido is a young man in his late twenties with jet black hair and flawless dark skin. Though handsome, he seems more brooding than dashing, and his brow is con-



sistently furrowed as though in deep thought. His uniform is an adapted version of military fatigues used for urban camouflage, with torso-covering body armor modeled after that worn by ancient samurai but manufactured of a tough, lightweight material that keeps it from impeding his movement. At his hip he wears a modern katana; the weapon was forged using a light but strong steel alloy mounted on an ergonomically designed hilt, and was honed to incredible sharpness by high-intensity lasers that sharpened the blade down to the molecular level. Additionally, a single Colt M1911 is strapped to the outside of his right thigh, opposite the katana so that either may be drawn with the right hand when needed.

Bushido: (Strong 3/Martial Artist 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8+2 plus 5d8+2; hp 56; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +7 Class, +2 armor); BAB +8/+3; Grap +11; Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+6, katana), +12/+7 melee (1d8+3, unarmed strike), or +10/+5 ranged (2d6, Colt M1911); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Flying kick, iron fist (one attack), improved melee smash, living weapon 1d8, melee smash; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 9; Rep +1; Wealth +9; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 9.

Occupation: Athlete (bonus class skills: Balance, Jump, Tumble).

Skills: Balance +4, Hide +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Move Silently +6, Profession (sensei) +4, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Spot +5, Tumble +7.

Feats: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (katana), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (katana).

Possessions: Colt M1911, GPS receiver, mastercraft katana +1, samurai armor, urban camouflage, walkie-talkie (professional).

Ronin

Much mystery surrounds Ronin. A reliable agent and a dangerous man, Ronin treads near the border of insanity at times. Although reckless with his own life, Ronin has yet to give his teammates reason to consider him a threat to their continued survival. Ronin is an outcast from the group who seems to chafe under Bushido's leadership but has never wavered in his devotion to the Yakuza or to the Kage. In the field, Ronin seems to care little for weighing danger and flings himself headlong into the face of death, miraculously coming out alive each time but counting down the number of times he can do so before his luck runs out. Ronin has no fear of death, or so it seems, and fights with a zeal and borderline madness that makes him impossible to predict and fatal to second guess.

Unlike most of the other members of the Kage, Ronin was not a long-standing member of the Yakuza before joining the team. In fact, he simply appeared in a night-club owned by the syndicate and demanded to speak to Bushido, calling for the leader of the Kage by a codename that was supposed to be unknown to anyone outside the Yakuza. When denied an audience, Ronin simply vanished only to return two weeks later with the heads of the leaders of rival organizations, offering them in good faith in order to gain access to the Kage. Intrigued, Yakuza leaders granted him an audience with Bushido, which he demanded be between he and Bushido alone. After hours in the interrogation room where the conference took place (where, mysteriously, all the Yakuza bugs and listening devices simply ceased to work during the meeting), the two emerged. Bushido announced to a stunned group that Ronin would be joining his team, effective immediately. To this day, none but Ronin and Bushido

New Equipment

The Kage has extensive contacts in Japan's high-tech industry, giving them access to an impressive array of technological wonders.

Kunoichi's Mask

A featureless mask of lacquered crimson, this item was specially made by technicians under orders from the Yakuza for the ninja Kunoichi (though other prototypes may exist). This mask is a marvel of modern Japanese technology and one of the reasons she is so successful in the field: the lenses contain automatic glare dampeners for rapid changes from darkness to light, an infrared filter, a night-vision filter, a three dimensional heads-up display (HUD), and a one-way communications link allowing data to be transferred to her on the fly. The weapon grants the following abilities: Darkvision (200 feet), +2 equipment bonus to Spot checks, and a +2 equipment bonus to Knowledge (tactics) checks when using the HUD.

Wealth DC: 32

Surveillance Disruptor

One of the most useful items in Ronin's varied stock, the surveillance disruptor can confuse electronic surveillance circuits, both audio and visual, within a 30-foot radius. Any attempt to use monitoring equipment, from video cameras to bugs, fails, resulting only in static or highly distorted images, making Ronin something of a ghost to electronic equipment.

Wealth DC: 21

know what was said, but from then forward Bushido seemed to believe that the strange man was as trustworthy as any other member of the organization.

Ronin has a vagabond look about him. A tattered brown leather trench coat covers what appears to be the well-worn remnants of a U.S. Air Force pilot's uniform. His distinctly Asian face, constantly sporting a darkening patch of rough stubble, is shaded by the brim of his equally ragged leather hat; just below the edge of the hat, a wicked vertical scar slashes over his empty left eye socket. The grip of a custom Desert Eagle that Ronin keeps with him at all times peeks from a shoulder holster at the edge of his coat. He always keeps a variety of gadgets and other technological curiosities hidden throughout the pockets of his coat, including a combination earpiece/microphone that he uses to communicate directly with other members of the Kage.

Ronin: (Fast 4/Tough 4); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 4d8+2 plus 4d10+3; hp 64; Mas 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +8 Class); BAB +6/+1; Grap +8; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, unarmed strike), or +9/+4 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, remain conscious, robust, uncanny dodge 1; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 5; Rep +2; Wealth +7; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Hide, Sleight of Hand).

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +6, Concentration +7, Drive +5, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +8, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Japanese, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak Japanese, Tumble +8.

Feats: Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Double Tap, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Damage Threshold, Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Possessions: GPS receiver, lockpick set, mastercraft Desert Eagle +1, multipurpose tool, penlight, surveillance disruptor, trench coat, uniform, walkie-talkie (professional), plus a variety of unknown technical gadgets.

Kunoichi

Kunoichi's background and identity are perhaps more secret than even Ronin's. Heiress to the tradition of the ninja, Kunoichi is easily as stealthy and deadly as her predecessors. The Yakuza use Kunoichi as their primary assassin and spy; her unique talents with weaponry and impressive infiltration skills make her an asset worth protecting. Superstitious Yakuza whisper that Kunoichi can move without making any more noise than a moth's breath, and that she has never been seen by one of her victims before dying. As the Kage's only female member, Kunoichi stands out in the company of her teammates, but in the field even they see her rarely, if at all.

Authorities know little about Kunoichi beyond the obvious: she has trained for many years in the arts of the ninja and must be of considerable skill to have been chosen by the Kage. Even her teammates know little more than that, but few care to press the issue with a woman who could slit a person's throat and have her weapon re-sheathed before anyone else could reach for their sidearm.

The mystery surrounding Kunoichi, and many of the superstitious whisperings as well, stem from the great lengths to which she has gone to prevent her identity from being known. Kunoichi is completely mute, and utters not a sound even under intense pain or stress. She wears a blood-red lacquered mask at all times, even when training or meeting with other members of the Kage during downtime. The featureless mask covers her whole head, revealing crimson eyes behind a pair of thin slits. Some suspect that the mask conceals the fact that she is the daughter of a powerful Yakuza leader. Other rumors insist that Kunoichi is not one, but two women, identical twins that trade off from mission to mission.

In the field, Kunoichi wears a form-fitting black bodysuit that hugs her slender curves perfectly. While on covert missions, her crimson mask is replaced by a more high-tech metallicversion with form-fitting lenses over the eye slits. She wears an antique ninja-to sword across her back with the hilt protruding over her shoulder, a second smaller companion blade on her back parallel to

her hips, and has a suppressed Walther PPK with laser sight strapped to the outside of her thigh.

Kunoichi: (Fast 3/Infiltrator 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8 plus 5d8; hp 40; Mas 11; Init +8; Spd 30 ft; Defense 22, touch 22, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +8 Class); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +8 melee (2d6, crit 19-20, ninja-to), +0 melee (1d6, wakizashi), +5 melee (1d6, unarmed strike), or +8 ranged (Walther PPK); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ evasion, improved evasion, improvised implements, skill mastery (Hide, Move Silently, Tumble), sweep, uncanny dodge 1; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +2; Wealth +10; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +8, Escape Artist +6, Hide +15, Jump +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +17, Read/Write Japanese, Search +3, Speak Japanese (understand only), Tumble +13.

Feats: Brawl, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (ninja-to), Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Stealthy, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse (ninja-to).

Possessions: Bodysuit, crimson mask, GPS receiver, ninja-to, wakizashi, Walther PPK with laser sight.

sanzoku

Unlike other members of his team, Sanzoku seldom engages in person-to-person combat. As the team's vehicles expert, Sanzoku prefers the high-speed world of motorcycles and sports cars to the up close and personal experience of combat. More than just the driver of the getaway vehicle, Sanzoku is also a scout and an expert marksman, earning him the role of sniper when the mission calls for it. Sanzoku is something of a paradox; on the one hand, he has the desire for speed running through his veins, while on the other hand he sometimes stays still for hours or days at a time when in position to take down a target with his sniper rifle.

Sanzoku was originally a professional motorcycle racer who toured the world participating in dangerous and glory-filled chases. Soon, the legitimate racing circuit began to lose its thrill as officials imposed more and more safety regulations, and Sanzoku soon became bored. He turned to street racing, an even more high-stakes game where the wrong turn meant death and victory meant the greatest exhilaration of his life. Unfortunately, the gambling that came with the street races soon landed Sanzoku into heavy debt to a Yakuza boss, and he was forced to work off that debt by delivering contraband to other criminals all over Tokyo. Sanzoku soon came to realize that the only thing more exhilarating than street racing was outmaneuvering the police, and so began a downward spiral leading him deeper into the criminal underworld. His steady hand and nerves of steel led him to sniper training, and soon he became a multipurpose agent with Kage material written all over him.

Sanzoku is one of the youngest members of the organization, barely 25 years old. He has a motorcycle racer's build and wild hair dyed with streaks of blond. He wears narrow black sunglasses that wrap around the sides of his eyes. A well-trimmed goatee tempers his otherwise boyish face, and he has the phrase "Drop the Hammer" tattooed on the back of his neck in Japanese. Clad in a dark green padded, flame-retardant motorcyclist's suit, Sanzoku rarely goes far from his motorcycle—what else, but a Kawasaki Ninja.

Sanzoku: (Tough 3/Daredevil 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d10+2 plus 5d10+3; hp 69; Mas 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 Class); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +7 ranged (2d10, PSG-1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ action boost, adrenaline rush (one ability score), fearless, nip-up, remain conscious, sonic/concussion resistance; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 4; Rep +2; Wealth +4; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Occupation: Athlete (bonus class skills: Balance, Drive, Tumble).

Skills: Balance +8, Concentration +13, Drive +15, Spot +9, Pilot +5, Profession (motorcycle racer) +4, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Tumble +7.

Feats: Brawl, Dead Aim, Drive-by Attack, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: GPS receiver, Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle, PSG-1 sniper rifle, racing uniform, walkie-talkie (professional).

wu

The only Kage member not to be a native of the island of Japan, Wu is a Chinese emigrant who escaped his home country as a young man to avoid the communist regime. The team's foremost firearms expert, Wu has honed his sharpshooting skill, combining it with martial arts to create a fighting style many have nicknamed "gun fu." Graceful, quick, and precise, Wu can perform amazing feats of gun slinging with the discipline and speed of a martial arts expert. Seeming to be something out of a Chinese action movie, Wu defies both logic and gravity with sideways leaps and incredible flips, all the while keeping his guns blazing and whipping his firearms around his body at almost unbelievable speeds.

As a young man, Wu was a member of a police force in Beijing. After striking a superior officer (who also happened to be a nephew of a high-ranking government official), Wu was forced into exile and came to Japan. After failed attempts to offer his services to police in Tokyo and to the Japanese government, he turned out of frustration to the Yakuza in order to feed himself and scratch out a living. After long enough, the Yakuza wiped out the cop that he once was, replacing it with a mafia hitman. His unique fighting style saved him many times over in the dangerous world of the Yakuza, but eventually his superiors realized what an asset he would be on their special task force. Despite his Chinese heritage, he was selected for service in the Kage and accepted with-

out hesitation. Now numb to the violence around him, he has little remorse if it means a higher paycheck and a chance for action.

At 37, Wu is the second-oldest member of the Kage team. Still in top physical condition and hardened after years of work on the mean streets of Tokyo, he reveals little emotion, often seeming cold and distant. His inky black eyes constantly track everything he sees as if it were a moving target. His somewhat rounded face reveals his Chinese heritage, and only barely noticeable gray hair marks his temples. He wears a tight black tank top and green military fatigue pants, with black army boots laced up to the middle of his shins. Slung across his hips are a pair of holsters in which sit his prized possessions: a pair of custom-crafted Beretta 93R pistols whose grips were made specifically for his hands, each with the entire text of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* laser-engraved microscopically along the weapon's barrel.

Wu: (Fast 3/Gunslinger 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8+2 plus 5d10+2; hp 61; Mas 15; Init +4; Spd 35 ft; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 Class); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6, unarmed strike), or +12 ranged (2d6, Beretta 93R); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Close combat shot, defensive position, evasion, increase speed, lightning shot; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7; AP 8; Rep +2; Wealth +7; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Occupation: Law Enforcement (bonus class skills: Gather Information, Intimidate).

Skills: Balance +7, Concentration +4, Bluff +3, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Move Silently +6, Read/Write Mandarin, Speak Japanese, Speak Mandarin, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +9, Tumble +12.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Double Tap, Gun Fu, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Two-weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (custom Beretta 93M).

Possessions: (2) Mastercraft Beretta 93R +2, GPS receiver, walkie-talkie (professional).

shogun

The man known as Shogun is the only member of the Kage to stay away from field missions. Although reputed to have been a formidable warrior in his youth, Shogun now acts as the Kage's overall leader and mission planner. While other members of the team are placed on field assignments, Shogun remains in a safe location to coordinate the other team members via global positioning systems, surveillance satellites, and provide other support such as supply requisitioning, remote computer assistance, and overall strategy. While Bushido is the team's field leader, Shogun makes sure the team has all the data they need to function efficiently. Additionally, Shogun controls the information sent to Kunoichi's mask computer.

Shogun has been with the team for many years, and some rumors claim that he was a member of the very first Kage team to be formed during the Cold War years. Regardless of when exactly he joined, Shogun was a well-respected member of the Yakuza crime syndicate well before joining the mercenary squad. A capable planner and leader, Shogun found himself on the Kage team in order to coordinate what seemed to be a collection of dangerous loose cannons. During Shogun's time

as the team's mission planner, not a single member of the Kage has gone rogue or betrayed the team. That is to say that none of the Yakuza have heard of any betrayal; it may be that some of the team's casualties over the years have been the result of Shogun's elimination of a dangerous loose end.

Shogun is an immaculately dressed man in his mid-fifties, still full of vigor and life. The only member of the team to show any signs of being personable, Shogun would make an excellent businessman or politician in the Western world. He always wears tailored designer suits that accent his sparkling blue eyes and metallic gray hair. The embroidered head of a horse facing away from his body features prominently in the breast of all his suits; some suggest the emblem marks Shogun as a member of a secret organization even more influential than the Yakuza, although it could simply be a familial mark in memory of his heritage.

Shogun (Smart 4/Charismatic 4); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 4d6 plus 4d6; hp 68; Mas 10; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 Class); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +5 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ coordinate, exploit weakness, inspiration, savant (Research); AL Yakuza; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; AP 12; Rep +8; Wealth +16; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Occupation: Investigative (bonus class skills: Gather Information, Research).

Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +10, Concentration +3, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +9, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +10, Investigate +9, Knowledge (tactics) +11, Knowledge (streetwise) +9, Listen +7, Read/Write Arabic, Read/Write English, Read/Write Japanese, Read/Write Mandarin, Read/Write Spanish, Research +12, Search +9, Speak Arabic, Speak English, Speak Japanese, Speak Mandarin, Speak Spanish, Spot +10.

Feats: Dodge, Educated, Improved Initiative, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Reload, Renown, Studious, Windfall.

Possessions: Armani suit, laptop computer, S&W M29, walkie-talkie (professional).

Using the Kage

For Gamemasters looking to add a unique group of antagonists to a campaign, the Kage make an excellent choice for physical villains. Their ties to the powerful Japanese underworld make them both dangerous and exotic, and definitely a stretch from the type of villains players might expect to encounter.

In a realistic *d20 Modern* campaign, the group works well as it stands with little need for modification. The party could cross paths with them while unknowingly thwarting a Yakuza plot, setting the stage for future confrontations and chances for retribution. An adventuring party that has garnered a significant reputation might find the bounties on their heads being collected by the deadly Kage, or similarly they might find that an influential enemy of theirs has paid the Yakuza to send their assassins after the party. If the GM wishes to use the Kage more prominently, they may be acting as the main implements of an ongoing conspiracy and defeating each member reveals further clues about the nature of the plot.

If you're using the *Shadow Chasers* campaign option, perhaps the Kage are in the employ of a darker power than the Yakuza who uses the agents to eliminate would-be heroes rather than dirtying its own hands. For a greater challenge, each member of the team might have access to some darker powers, or each team member could be a vampire or some other ghoul. Similarly, they might function as a rival team of adventurers who are out to eliminate the threats of the dark power to the world, and having the heroes in their way makes their job all the more difficult.

In the *Urban Arcana* campaign setting, the Kage might be the agents of a powerful wizard who have been granted their exceptional talents by his magic. Transforming any given member of the team into another species also twists the concept to a new level of uniqueness; rather than being Japanese, perhaps that person is an elf who has slipped through the veil and gone to work for the Yakuza. Their unique weapons and armor could certainly benefit from magical enhancement, and as Bushido's sword bursts into flames or Sanzoku's motorcycle suddenly becomes invisible their power increases significantly.

For the *Agents of PSI* campaign option, a simple solution is to give the team access to certain psionic powers and make them a formidable counter-balance to the heroes. Nothing says conspiracy theory more than highly unique villains infiltrating top-secret facilities and protecting powerful crime lords with seemingly infinite wealth. Likewise, it may be that the Kage are on the trail of a mystery whose secrets they wish to gain for their Yakuza masters, forcing the players to stop the mercenaries from reaching their goals and keeping whatever powers they were seeking out of the hands of the crime syndicate. With a few minor tweaks to abilities and histories, the Kage can blend into any campaign with relative ease. ●

New Feat
Gun Fu

You have meshed martial arts with gunplay and can perform amazing stunts of dueling with firearms.

Prerequisites: Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Tumble 4+.

Benefits: When making an attack using only handguns, you may make a single Tumble check as a free action.

Special: This feat may be taken by the Gunslinger advanced class as a bonus feat.

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

I, JENSAARAI

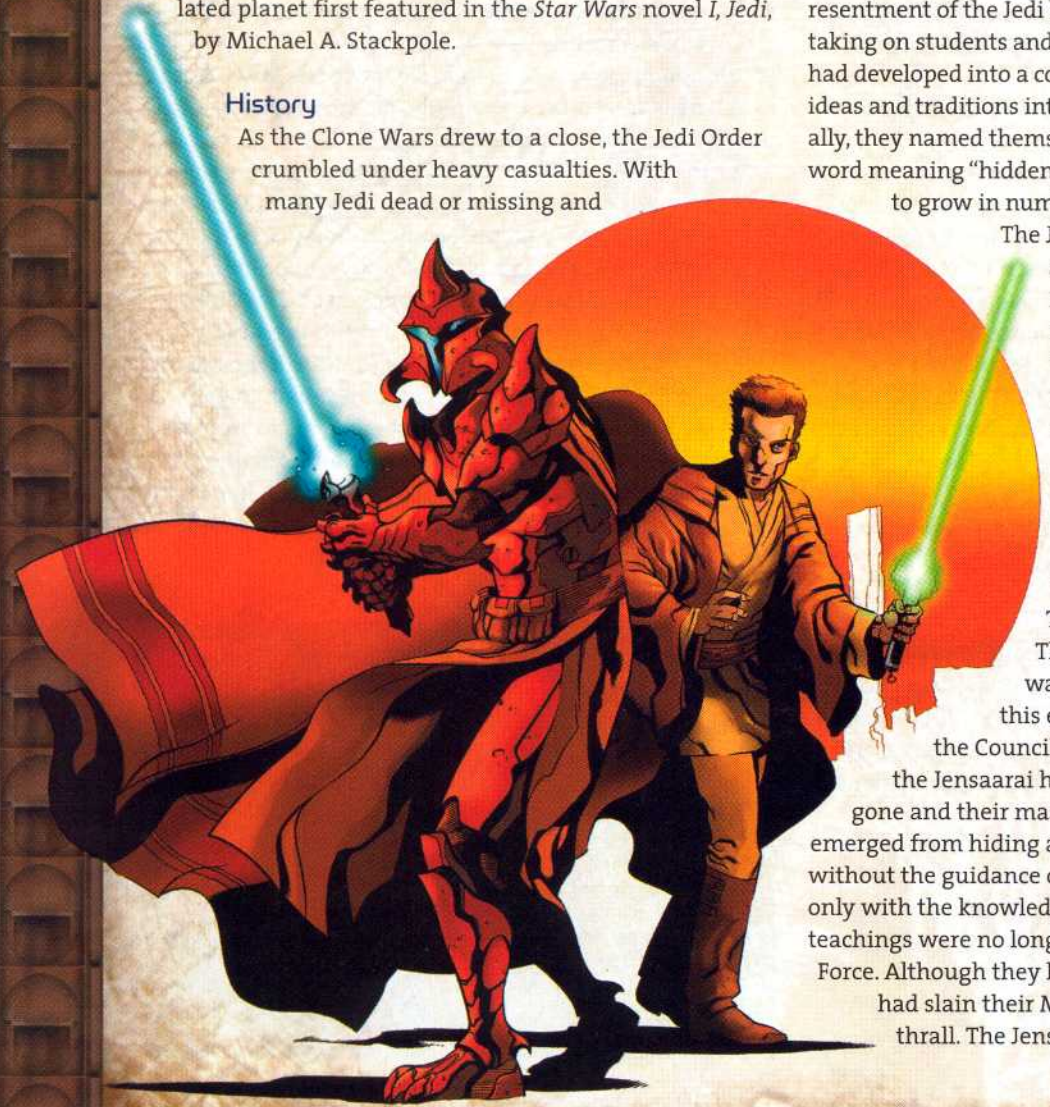
By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Ramón Pérez

Think, for a moment, of the most interesting and exciting aspects of the Jedi: the flashing lightsabers, mystic powers, dedication to the Republic, deep philosophy, and an awe-inspiring presence unseen in the rest of the galaxy. Picture the Sith, their mortal enemies: aggressive, lurking in the shadows, and ruthless beyond all measure. Now imagine that some of those same Jedi were trained by teachers who used aspects of Sith philosophy in their instruction, integrating them into a training regimen while isolated from the rest of the galaxy. The result of this combination is an organization of Force users known as the Jensaarai, the armor-wearing, lightsaber-toting vigilante guardians of an isolated planet first featured in the *Star Wars* novel *I, Jedi*, by Michael A. Stackpole.

History

As the Clone Wars drew to a close, the Jedi Order crumbled under heavy casualties. With many Jedi dead or missing and the future of the order in question, some Jedi began deserting the Order and heading off to survive on their own. One such deserter was a mysterious Jedi known as Nikkos Tyris, an Anzati who was one of the oldest living Jedi at the time.

Tyris and at least two other Jedi Knights had discovered ancient Sith documents dating back thousands of years. Upon deciphering the cryptic Sith language, they began to absorb the knowledge within. This new information drastically altered their view of the Jedi, inspiring them to splinter off to form their own organization. Digging deeper into the mysterious documents, they learned new and forbidden techniques that the Jedi had deemed highly dangerous or maliciously evil. Their power grew quickly and their resentment of the Jedi began to consume them. They began taking on students and forming families; eventually they had developed into a community that incorporated Sith ideas and traditions into traditional Jedi teachings. Eventually, they named themselves the Jensaarai, an ancient Sith word meaning "hidden followers of truth," and continued to grow in numbers.



The Jedi Order dispatched a trio of Jedi, among them Corellian Jedi Master Nejaa Halcyon and Caamasi Jedi Knight Ylenic It'kla, to either bring Tyris and his band back into the Order or keep them from spreading their heresy any further. Unsurprisingly, the tainted leaders of the Jensaarai resisted. On the plains of the moon Susevfi, there was a great lightsaber duel between the three Jedi against Tyris and the other two fallen Jedi. The three Jensaarai were slain, as was Master Halcyon. Sole-survivor of this encounter, Ylenic It'kla returned to the Council with the belief that the threat of the Jensaarai had been eliminated. With the Jedi gone and their masters slain, the remaining Jensaarai emerged from hiding and continued to train, though without the guidance of true Masters. Forced to continue only with the knowledge they had been given, Jensaarai teachings were no longer tainted by the dark side of the Force. Although they harbored hatred for the Jedi who had slain their Masters, they escaped the dark side's thrall. The Jensaarai teachings became more prac-

tical, focusing less on the inherent existentialism of the Jedi, but with a respect for life not found in Sith lore.

Like the Jedi, the Jensaarai were hunted by the Empire, forcing them to remain in hiding until the Emperor's death. Years after the Battle of Endor, the Jensaarai resurfaced when former Moff Leonia Tavira convinced the Saarai-kaar, leader of the Jensaarai, that they were still in danger. Her manipulation turned the Jensaarai into Force-powered pawns. Tavira ordered the capture of smuggling heiress Mirax Terrik in a revenge plot to lure her husband, Rogue Squadron pilot and Jedi apprentice Corran Horn, to Susevfi. The plot was foiled with the help Jedi Master Luke Skywalker and Caamasi Elegos A'kla. The Caamasi species' unique *memnii*—shared memories—revealed the true events of the long-ago battle between the Jensaarai and the Jedi. Having witnessed the truth about their founders, the Jensaarai entered an uneasy alliance with the Jedi and sent a delegation to Master Skywalker's Jedi academy on Yavin 4.

Organization

Founded on training perfected by the Jedi Order for thousands of years, the Jensaarai tradition contains many similarities to that of the Jedi. Special Jensaarai roam Susevfi, discreetly testing youths for inborn ability and secretly recruiting them as apprentices. With no code of abstinence, the Jensaarai ranks are further swollen by their own Force-sensitive offspring. The young first sharpen their martial skills in large groups before graduating to a series of one-on-one training regimens. Jensaarai apprentices train with a new mentor each year until attaining the rank of defender.

A Jensaarai apprentice is taught the art of the lightsaber from a very young age. Whereas for Jedi the construction of a lightsaber is a major step, for the Jensaarai it is only half the equation. Their training focuses on defending others and protecting the Jensaarai from being discovered by enemies such as the Jedi. In this time, lessons combine defensive aspects of Jedi training with more aggressive Sith tactics. Jensaarai lore is rife with tales of Jedi betrayal. Once the Empire sought to destroy all Force-users, apprentices were similarly taught of Imperial injustices. Jensaarai apprentices focus more on martial skills for the better part of their education when compared to Jedi Padawan apprentices, who are expected to seek balance in their studies.

Typical Jensaarai Apprentice: Male or Female Human Jedi Guardian 4; Init +1 (Dex); Def 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class bonus); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 35/14; Atk +8 melee* (2d8+2, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +5 ranged; SQ Deflect (+1 dodge bonus to Defense, –4 penalty to redirect); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep 1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Lightsaber, comlink, standard clothing.

**A typical Jensaarai apprentice has constructed his or her own lightsaber.*

Skills: Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +4, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Speak Basic.

Force Skills: Battlemind +6, Enhance Ability +6, Force Defense +4, Force Stealth +4, Force Strike +4, Heal Self +4, Move Object +2.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

The final test of a Jensaarai student's training is the construction of ceremonial armor. Once complete, the apprentice is then a Jensaarai defender, charged with protecting the people of Susevfi. Similar to the Jedi Knights, defenders maintain truth and justice. Unlike the meditative Jedi, Jensaarai are quick to resort to martial solutions and overt use of the Force to maintain the peace.

Defenders carry on the prejudices and grudges born of their formative years in everything they do. During the reign of the Empire, some defenders roamed Susevfi, harassing Imperial forces. Others relentlessly prepare for the imminent confrontation with the remnants of the Jedi Order. Many defenders master a variant lightsaber combat style known as Shien as well as their own martial arts style, called Rek'dul. Through the application of these fighting techniques, the aggressive Jensaarai defender is a formidable foe in combat.

Typical Jensaarai Defender: Male or Female Human Jedi Guardian 6/Jensaarai Defender 4; Init +1 (Dex); Def 19 (+1 Dex, +8 class bonus); DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 76/15; Atk +14/+9 melee* (4d8+2, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +11/+6 ranged; SQ Deflect (+2 dodge bonus to Defense, –4 penalty to redirect, 2m area), Force barrier, resist dark side; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +6; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep 3; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Lightsaber, Jensaarai armor, comlink.

**A typical Jensaarai Defender has constructed his or her own lightsaber.*

Skills: Craft (armor) +6, Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +7, Move Silently +2, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Speak Basic, Spot +4.

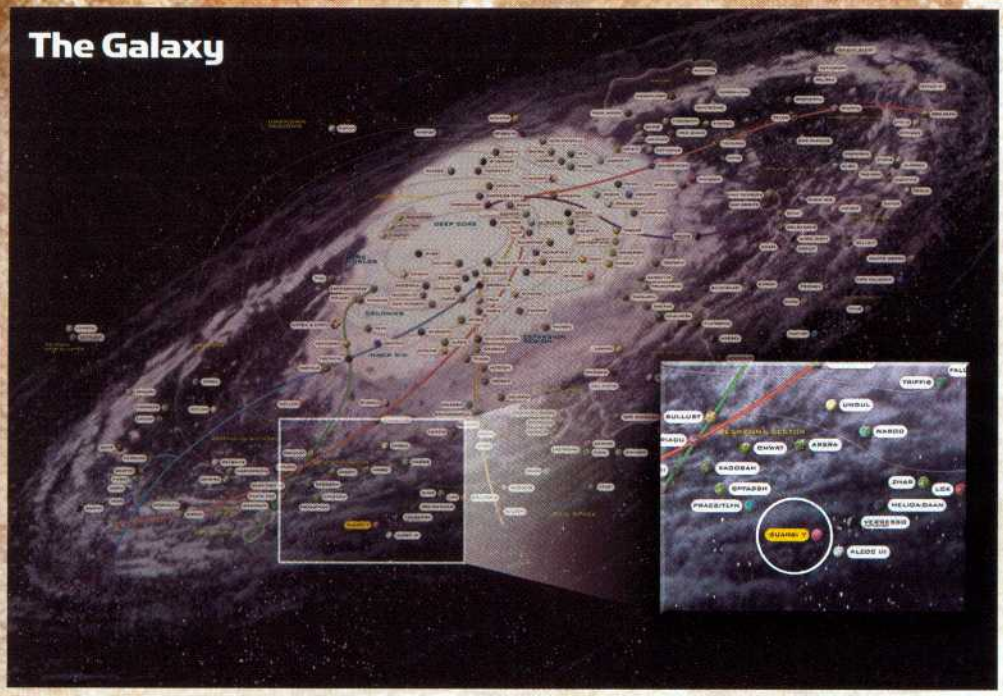
Force Skills: Battlemind +9, Enhance Ability +9, Farseeing +3, Force Defense +6, Force Stealth +9, Force Strike +4, Heal Self +6, Illusion +4, Move Object +4, See Force +3, Telepathy +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Attuned, Burst of Speed, Control, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

The Saarai-kaar

From the founding of the Jensaarai until their discovery (and beyond) there has always been a single leader known as the Saarai-kaar. The fallen Jedi Tyris was the



Suarbi 7/5

Suarbi 7/5 is the fifth moon of the seventh planet of the Suarbi system, located in the Quence sector. Suarbi 7 is a massive gas giant which generates enough gravity to sustain an asteroid belt and more than a dozen moons. Susevfi, as Suarbi 7/5 is commonly known, is covered in vast, sprawling savannahs and grasslands, and boasts a large civilized population. The planet was originally colonized by humans about 400 years before the Battle of Yavin; Corporate Sector expatriates decided to tame the habitable moon. Several major settlements developed from that original expedition. The planet has a Stellar-class spaceport in the seaside city of Yumfla that is the center for commerce on the moon. It is the planet's largest settlement and central location from which the Jensaarai operate.

Though relatively young as a colony world, the planet boasts a moderate-sized population composed predominantly of humans. Susevfi is as technologically advanced as most Mid Rim worlds, and sees a fair amount of space traffic on a daily basis. For the most part, the moon has enough natural resources to be self-sufficient. Still, there is a healthy amount of imported goods available in the moon's major ports.

The Jensaarai are headquartered out of a guild house constructed for them by a wealthy benefactor. The Saarai-kaar issues all assignments and orders from this building, and young apprentices are trained within. Beneath the building, ominously dark catacombs lead to a mausoleum. It is the final resting place of fallen Jensaarai Masters and heavily inscribed with Sith writings.

first Saarai-kaar. He was succeeded by a human woman in her mid-forties with fiery blue eyes and a fierce and disciplined personality. Originally the wife of one of the Jedi that rebelled with Tyris during the Clone Wars, she has done incredible things for the group and suffered some terrible tragedies. Her husband was slain by the Jedi, her son murdered by Darth Vader, and she's endured a lifetime of being hunted, feared, and accused of heinous acts to maintain the secret of the Jensaarai. Though beleaguered, she has managed to keep the organization growing over the years, despite the bitterness in her heart and a thirst for vengeance. With the arrival of Corran Horn and Luke Skywalker on Susevfi, the Saarai-kaar's world turned upside down. Confronted with the truth about her husband, she reconsidered her long hatred of the Jedi. Hoping to strengthen both traditions, the Saarai-kaar accepted Master Skywalker's offer to trade information and training techniques.

Saarai-kaar: Female Human Jedi Guardian 6/Jensaarai Defender 9; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 22 (+2 Dex, +10 class bonus); DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 93/13; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee* (6d8+1, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +17/+12/+7 ranged; SQ Deflect (+3 dodge bonus to Defense, –3 penalty to redirect, 2m area), Force barrier, resist dark side, Force cloak, ballistakinesis; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +9; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 7; Rep 5; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13. Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Lightsaber, Jensaarai armor, comlink.

*The Saarai-kaar has constructed her own lightsaber.

Skills: Bluff +3, Craft (armor) +6, Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +11, Move Silently +4, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Sense Motive +3, Speak Basic, Spot +6.

Force Skills: Battlemind +9, Enhance Ability +10, Farseeing +4, Force Defense +7, Force Stealth +9, Force Strike +7, Heal Self +7, Illusion +7, Move Object +6, See Force +6, Telepathy +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Attuned, Burst of Speed, Control, Force Mind, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

Jensaarai in the Star Wars RPG

Jensaarai heroes and Gamemaster characters make an interesting and unique alternative to Jedi in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. For players, the Jensaarai are an alternative to the Jedi that retain the use of a lightsaber without the restrictions of the Jedi Order. An adventuring Jensaarai hero might find herself scouting the galaxy for interesting news to report to the Saarai-kaar, for instance. The isolation of the Jensaarai presents a challenge for GMs, as well. Luckily, Susevfi can be developed as a campaign setting. Possible adventures include defending the system from pirate raids, repelling Imperial agents, eliminating Black Sun activity, and even dealing with Jensaarai that have been lost to the dark side.

In the Rise of the Empire era, the Jensaarai often will find themselves coming to terms with who they are in the wake of the devastation of the Clone Wars and the "betrayal" of the Jedi. During these years, their travels in the galaxy must proceed with caution, as the Empire's Jedi hunters are everywhere. Like much of the galaxy, the *Jensaarai's* loathing for the Empire can result in lashing out, rebellion, or other conflict. Similarly despised are the Jedi themselves, few of whom survived the Empire's ascent but are still to be fought against nonetheless. When encountering any of these antagonists, all Jensaarai, fueled by the strength of their conviction and aggressive philosophies, react with vehemence or outright violence in many cases. Some Force users that have not been trained by the Jedi might find themselves the target of Jensaarai conversion; some Jedi might even find themselves being preached to by a zealous defender in the hopes of bringing them back to the true way. But with Inquisitors on their tail and an unfamiliar galaxy before them, few players will have much time to debate philosophy with their rivals.

Once the Jensaarai come out of hiding (an event that occurs 11 years after the battle of Yavin), their perspective changes drastically. Following the destruction of the Empire, the Jensaarai ally with Master Skywalker's Jedi and trade techniques. Jensaarai defenders are not a common sight, but have few compunctions about exploring the galaxy. When the Yuuzhan Vong invade and demand the unconditional surrender of all Jedi, the Jensaarai will find themselves hunted too. The extra-galactic, Force-absent invaders fail to see the difference between the two.

Introducing a Jensaarai GM character into an adventure or campaign can be a refreshing change from the stark moral strongholds of the light and dark sides of the Force. Because the Jensaarai walk a fine line between darkness and light, it might be unclear to Jedi heroes whether an angry, violent defender is mostly good or mostly evil. A Jensaarai-in-hiding might work with the heroes, helping or hindering them, without revealing her true motives.

Jensaarai Armor

Years after the death of Nikkos Tyris, the Saarai-kaar discovered Sith records that told of weaving cortosis armor. Since neither Tyris nor any of her students could understand many of the ancient Sith writings, the armor constructed by the Jensaarai is significantly weaker than the powerful suits of dark armor constructed by Sith craftsmen.

A *Jensaarai's* armor is to the defender what the lightsaber is to the Jedi Knight. Its construction is a rite of passage that marks the apprentice's dedication to defense and protection. When the apprentice is deemed ready, he chooses a creature that best exemplifies his personality traits. He constructs his armor, in the image of that creature, fashioning a suit that covers head, torso, arms, abdomen, and thighs. The armor of the Saarai-kaar differs slightly; it's in the image of a beautiful woman. The armor is made of woven cortosis, a craft perfected by the Jensaarai over the years. The end result is an intimidating suit of custom-built armor that fits like a glove.

Jensaarai armor is the equivalent of a combat jumpsuit as described in Chapter 7: Equipment of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rulebook* with two added benefits. Like the Yuuzhan Vong's Vonduun crab armor, cortosis weave armor retains its DR value against lightsaber attacks. Plus, any lightsaber that damages the wearer is deactivated, requiring the attacker to spend a free action to reactivate it using the switch weapon mode free action. If the character has any remaining lightsaber attacks, he loses his next single lightsaber attack that round while reactivating his weapon.

Creating a basic suit of Jensaarai armor requires 5500 credits worth of materials. Some Jensaarai choose to functionally enhance the creature motif of the armor's design. For example, a suit of armor intended to resemble a predatory bird might have integral macrobinoculars or clawed fingers. See the table below for more options not available in Chapter 7: Equipment. Improving upon the basic design increases the material cost by 1/3 the added item's purchase cost. Only low, medium, or high complexity items can be added in this way. Regardless of how many additions are made to the armor, it is a high complexity item when determining cost of tools and Craft DC. Five or more ranks of Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) are required to begin work on a suit of armor. See the Craft skill in Chapter 4: Skills of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rulebook* for more information.

Table 1: Jensaarai Armor Options

Option	Material Cost	Weight
Claws (+1 punch damage per damage die, changes damage type to Slashing)	50	2 kg
Camouflage (+4 equipment bonus to Hide checks in one chosen environment: arctic, desert, forest, jungle, mountain, swamp, or urban)	100	0.5 kg

Jensaarai Defender

Prestige Class Requirements

To qualify to become a Jensaarai defender, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4 or more.

Skills: Battlemind 6 ranks, Force Stealth 6 ranks, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) 5 ranks, Read/Write Sith.

Feats: Alter, Armor Proficiency (light), Control, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-sensitive, Sense.

Force Level: 6+

Special: Jensaarai defenders must have constructed their own lightsaber and suit of Jensaarai armor.

Game Rule Information

Vitality: Jensaarai defenders gain 1d8 vitality points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Class Skills

The Jensaarai defender's class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows: Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (None), Speak Language (None), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis). All Force skills for which the Jensaarai defender meets the prerequisites are considered class skills.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6+ Int Modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the Jensaarai defender prestige class.

Starting Feats

The Jensaarai defender has the Weapon Proficiency feats for simple weapons and blaster pistols.

Deflect (Defense)

The Jensaarai defender gains deflect (defense), which provides a +1 dodge bonus to Defense when he uses his lightsaber to block ranged attacks. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Defender

At 1st level, the Jensaarai defender gets a bonus feat. This feat must be drawn from the following list and the Jensaarai defender must meet any prerequisites.

Burst of Speed, Dissipate Energy, Lightsaber Defense, Force Mastery, Force Mind, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Skill Emphasis (choose one Force skill that requires Control).

Increase Lightsaber Damage

A Jensaarai defender's ability to deal damage with the lightsaber improves as he gains levels. At 2nd, 5th, and 9th level, the Jensaarai defender's lightsaber damage increases by +1d8. This added damage is cumulative with increased lightsaber damage from other classes.

Force Barrier

At 3rd level, Jensaarai defenders gain the ability to create an impenetrable Force barrier to Sense-based Force skills, feats, and abilities. By spending 4 vitality points per round, the character can create a spherical barrier with a diameter equal to the character's Constitution score + 10 meters. This sphere is centered on the user and moves with him. Force users can detect this anomaly without a check of any kind.

Resist Dark Side

Also at 3rd level, Jensaarai defenders get a bonus to resist the dark side of the Force. Add one-half the character's Jensaarai defender class level (round down) to his Wisdom ability score when determining the effects of Dark Side Points.

Deflect (Extend Defense and Attack)

At 4th level, the Jensaarai defender learns to extend his defensive and offensive deflection skills to others within 2 meters of his position. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Table 2: The Jensaarai Defender

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+2	+1	Deflect (defense), Defender	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+3	+2	Increase lightsaber damage	+2	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+3	+2	Force barrier, resist dark side	+2	+1
4th	+4	+2	+4	+2	Deflect (extend defense and attack)	+3	+1
5th	+5	+3	+4	+3	Force cloak, increase lightsaber damage	+3	+1
6th	+6	+3	+5	+3	Deflect (attack), bonus feat	+4	+2
7th	+7	+4	+5	+4	Ballistakinesis	+4	+2
8th	+8	+4	+6	+4	Deflect (defense)	+5	+2
9th	+9	+4	+6	+4	Saarai-kaar, increase lightsaber damage	+5	+3
10th	+10	+5	+7	+5	Sith secrets	+6	+3

Force Cloak
At 5th level, the Jensaarai defender gains the ability to create a Force barrier that muddles electronic sensing devices. By spending 4 VP per round, the Jensaarai defender can create a sphere equal in diameter to the character's Constitution score + 10 meters that acts as a cloaking field affecting electronic sensors. This sphere is centered on the user, and moves with him. When electronic sensors are used on anything within that sphere, add +15 to the DC of anything completely encompassed by the sphere generated by this power.

Deflect (Attack)
At 6th level, a Jensaarai defender can deflect and redirect a number of attacks equal to one-half his total Force levels, rounded up. The redirected attack must miss the Jensaarai defender by 5 or less; any attack that hits the Jensaarai defender or misses by 5 or more points can't be redirected. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Ballistakinesis
At 7th level, the Jensaarai defender gains the ability to turn small objects into potentially deadly ballistae. By expending 3 VP, a character can cause a handful of objects (no larger than 5 kg in total weight) to be propelled at high velocity toward a target as though it were a missile weapon with a range increment of 6 meters. The Jensaarai defender makes a Move Object skill check (DC = target's Defense rating); if successful, the target suffers 2d6 damage. Using this ability requires an attack action.

Saarai-kaar
Upon reaching 9th level, the Jensaarai defender has achieved a skill level equal to that of the Saarai-kaar. While there can be only one such leader at a time, it is at this level that the rank of Saarai-kaar is achieved and the Jensaarai defender gets a bonus feat. This feat must be drawn from the following list and the Jensaarai defender must meet any prerequisites.

Burst of Speed, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Force Mind, High Force Mastery, Improved Force Mind, Lightsaber Defense, Skill Emphasis (choose one Force skill that requires Control), Weapon Focus (lightsaber).

Sith Secrets
At 10th level, the secrets and mysteries of the Sith become more comprehensible to the Jensaarai defender, who has unlocked their meaning by studying the ancient Sith tomes. While none but Nikkos Tyris and his rogue Jedi have achieved this level, it is feasible that one day a member of the Jensaarai might accomplish the same. The character discovers a Sith secret, and select one of the secrets below.

Improved Battlemind: Increase the bonus on attack rolls provided by the skill by +1.

Improved Force Defense: Increase the bonus on saving throws provided by the skill by +1.

Improved Force Grip/Force Lightning/Force Strike: Increase the amount of damage dealt by this skill by +1.

Improved Force Skill: Add a +1 Force bonus to any one Force skill in which the Jensaarai defender has ranks.

Starships of the Galaxy

Wayfarer-class Medium Transport

By Christopher West with J.D. Wiker
Illustration by Jeff Carlisle

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

The *Wayfarer*-class medium transport is constructed with a detachable portside section originally intended for modular reconfiguration. Kuat Systems Engineering (a now-folded subsidiary of Kuat Drive Yards) designed the Wayfarer so that it could load a passenger section, a hangar bay, or cargo module. Production costs forced KSE to scale back their plans and create only the hangar bay module, which, for most owners (who generally didn't store fighter craft, anyway), serves as cargo space. A few prototypes and custom builds of other modules exist, but are hard to find, limited primarily to bulk commerce corporate shipping operations centered on well-developed metropolitan planets like Coruscant.

The ship's detachable portside half (areas 1–6) fits into an armature extending from the other half (area 7 is connected to areas 8–16 by this armature). The versatility offered by the detachable section was initially exciting, until it was revealed that the design could not accept standard cargo containers. This, combined with a high price tag, ensured the demise of the ship's production and ultimately the entire company. Despite the flaws that kept the *Wayfarer* from becoming a huge commercial success, the ship's versatility makes it a well-rounded vessel for any buyer. Though it is outdated by the rise of the New Republic, many *Wayfarers* can still be found in widespread service.

Kuat Systems Engineering *Wayfarer*-class Medium Transport

Class: Space Transport
Size: Medium-sized (82 meters)
Hyperdrive: ×2, ×14 backup
Passengers: 6
Cargo Capacity: 220 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Cost: 202,500 (new), 130,000 (used)
Crew: 10 (Normal +2)
Initiative: +2 (+2 crew)
Maneuver: +2 (+2 crew)
Defense: 20 (+10 armor)
Shield Points: 60 (DR 15)
Hull Points: 160 (DR 15)
Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (6 squares/action)
Atmospheric Speed: 830 (14 squares/action)
Weapon: Laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (+2 fire control, +2 crew); **Damage:** 4d10×2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +4, S +2, M/L n/a.
Weapon: Quad laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Left; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (+2 fire control, +2 crew); **Damage:** 6d10×2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +4, S +2, M/L n/a.

But Who's Gonna Fly It, Kid?

Star Wars RPG heroes on a covert mission (or simply on the run from planetary authorities) might need to stow away aboard a cargo vessel to get to their destination. The modular cargo pod system of the *Wayfarer*-class medium transport makes it an ideal candidate for such activities. The heroes could easily hide inside storage crates already loaded within a detached cargo section awaiting pickup.

Compartment Key

1. **Forward Cargo Hold.** The forward cargo hold serves as a staging area for loading and unloading. It holds 25 tons of the ship's cargo capacity when full, but any more than about 10 tons means that fighter craft in the hangar bay cannot pass.
2. **Hangar Bay.** Though most owners use this compartment as a cargo hold, it is outfitted as a miniature hangar bay capable of carrying two Tiny ships comfortably. When not used as hangar space, it holds 160 tons of cargo. Each Tiny ship kept here reduces that total by 40 tons.
3. **Speeder Pool.** This is another case of a compartment generally used for something other than the intended design. The speeder pool can comfortably store two Large vehicles (or five speeder bikes) and one other Large vehicle if the ceiling clamps are employed. Otherwise, this area accounts for 15 tons of storage space.
4. **Secret Cargo Hold.** This 5-ton storage hold wasn't originally designed as a secret compartment, but the hatches are so easily disguised as blank bulkhead that it seems like the designers had that purpose in mind all along.
5. **Aft Cargo Hold.** The aft cargo hold can stow up to 25 tons, but that leaves precious little room for anyone to move through the compartment without crawling (Escape Artist check, DC 10).
6. **Portside Corridor.** The portside corridor is mean to provide easy access to the hangar bay when the aft cargo hold is completely full. It is jokingly referred to as "Lover's Lane," because it is so isolated.
7. **Gunnery Station.** When the hangar bay is detached, a crewman inside the gunnery station can also detach the station, allowing it to be maneuvered by small directional jets into position on the main hull on the module docking clamps. It also serves as a three-person escape pod (one seated, two in crash webbing), and has enough power to keep passengers alive for up to 12 hours—or about enough power to fire the attached quad laser once.
8. **Bridge.** The six-station bridge can be crewed by one person for short periods. It also controls the main gun, a laser cannon fixed in position atop the hull.
9. **Crew Cabins.** Each crew cabin has sleeping space for two crewmembers, with separate lockers for up to three crewmembers.
10. **First Mate's Cabin.** Can serve as a temporary passenger cabin.
11. **Offices.** Includes a desk and two chairs.
12. **Captain's Cabin.** Can serve as a temporary passenger cabin.
13. **Crew Lounge.** The spacious crew lounge includes the galley and a conference table, along with a nominal entertainment center.
14. **Refresher.** Cabinets here hold first aid supplies.
15. **Airlock.** The starboard airlock includes a small storage compartment containing three environmental suits.
16. **Drive Chamber.** The drive chamber includes a small closet for storing two environmental suits and a tool chest.

Wayfarer-class Medium Transport

Bunk

Cargo Crates

Chairs

Computer

Dejarik Table

Fuel Cells

Hatch, Airlock

Hatch, Floor

Hatch, Secret

Hatch, Standard

Hyperdrive

Life Support

Power Core

Power Loader

Refresher

Shield Generator

Sublight Engine

Table, Desk

1 square = 2 meters

INTO THE BRIGHT DESERT

By Creighton Broadhurst
with special thanks to Stuart Kerrigan and Paul Looby
Illustrations by David Hendee and Phil Hilliker
Cartography by Craig Zipse

Living Greyhawk™

Two millennia ago, Flan civilization reached its zenith on the arid grasslands of Sulm. Here, the Flan learned the secrets of agriculture, ironwork, and engineering, founded great cities, and raised majestic temples to their gods. In a series of swift, hard-fought campaigns, Sulm's neighbor states (Ronhas, Durha, Rhugha, and Truun) fell before the might of her iron-shod hosts. Continued aggression brought open warfare with an implacable enemy—Itar.

Situated in a rich coastal region southeast of Sulm, the valorous Sun Kingdom of Itar honored gods of light and progress and posed a serious military, financial, and ideological threat to Sulm. It wasn't enough. After three decades of open warfare, Sulm obliterated Itar's armies, mingling the blood of its soldiers with the ebbing lifeforce of Vathris, an Itarran god of ingenuity who had manifested to aid his people on the field of battle only to be stricken down by dark Sulmish magics.

With Itar's destruction, the entire region fell under Sulmish hegemony. Her people grew proud and her leaders corrupt and arrogant as wealth and tribute poured into the great temple-city capital, Utaa, seat of Sulmish rule. Sulmish society stagnated for centuries as decadence and evil grew into the hearts of her people; simultaneously tendrils of insurrection crept among the subjugated folk of the hinterlands.

For all its might and wisdom, doom came suddenly to Sulm. The nation's rulers, desperate to stem the rising tide of civil unrest and rebellion, delved too deeply into the poisonous wellspring from which their civilization had sprung. The last of Sulm's rulers, an ambitious an undoubtedly mad sorcerer named Shattados, cried out to the Lords of Evil for aid and received a whispered promise in exchange. His divine patron, Tharizdun, granted Shattados a powerful magic artifact, the *Scorpion Crown*, that would allow him total control over his subjects. The greedy overlord thrust the crown upon his head and brought doom to the entire region.

The *Crown's* fell curse initiated an agonizing transformation in Sulm's citizens, who found themselves transformed into hideous "manscorpions," half-breed wretches magically bound to the wearer of the Scorpion Crown.

Within a decade the grasslands were dead, withered into nothingness by an unnatural heat that yet plagues the region or scoured from the face of Oerth by violent and prolonged storms sweeping in from the Gearnat. The small pockets of vegetation surviving these twin perils were finally buried beneath an insidious, unstoppable tide of sand issuing like a cancer from the cities and holy places of the fallen Sulmites. Soon the curse took hold throughout the area, and what had once been called Sulm became the Bright Desert.

And somewhere, deep within the darkest recesses of the Lower Planes, Tharizdun chuckled softly to himself.

Thus Sulm passed into history, languishing all but forgotten until events transpiring in the city of Greyhawk in the year 584 CY thrust the accursed lands of the Bright Desert into the minds of the great and the good. In Harvester of that year, delegates from several nations gathered in the free city to sign a pact of non-aggression, hoping to bring an end to the so-called "Greyhawk Wars." On the Day of Great Signing, the archmage Rary of the Circle of Eight betrayed the city and his allies by attempting to destroy the entire delegation in a fiery conflagration. Rary's companions Tenser and Otiluke discovered their friend preparing to sabotage the treaty and were killed for their trouble. The archmage Bigby, also present, was wounded to within an inch of his life. But their sacrifice saved the treaty and revealed Rary as a traitor to his friends, to Greyhawk, and to the whole of the Flanaess.

But Rary hadn't acted alone. On the day of his treachery, cohorts and apprentices under the direction of the wily Lord Robilar (late of the Citadel of Eight) ransacked the lairs of Tenser and Otiluke, destroying potential clones and ensuring that the wizards would not return to avenge their deaths. Rary gathered his forces late in the day, teleporting en masse to his tower in Lopolla. Calling upon unrivaled magical powers, he wrenched his tower whole from the very foundation-rock of Ket's capital and transported it, along with Lord Robilar and his fanatical followers, thousands of leagues eastward to the Brass Hills, at the center of the Bright Desert. In short order Robilar's forces pacified the indigenous desertfolk, forcing them to pay homage to a burgeoning "Empire of the Bright Lands." A new power was born.

To this day, rumors abound about what drove the previously calm and peerlessly intelligent Rary to betray his former friends. Mordenkainen and wizards of Greyhawk's Society of Magi believe that Rary knew of the ancient histories that cluster thick about the Bright Lands, and that he likely seeks the catalyst of Sulm's unnatural fall. The Ketite archmage was always obsessed with *ioun stones*,

Hardby Pass
Knife Edge Pass
Abbor Alz
Ghost Tower of Inverness
N
Dagger Rock
Old Truun Northlands
Necropolis of Unjagh
Ul Bakak
Tulwar Oasis
Ruins of Darkbridge Temple
Shembai Oasis
Gai Hur
Abbor Alz
Woolly Bay
Fort Whiterock
Old Durha
Kalundi
Kary's Tower
Uplands of Unath
Brass Hills
Old Sulm
Old Rhugha
Kolum Oasis
Ruins of Utaa
Old Truun Wanderlands
The Zochal
Plain of Spears
Tower of the Sands
Var Oasis
The Twisted Canyon
Old Ronhass
Histak
Bright Desert
Empire of the Bright Lands
50 miles
Old Itar
Sea of Gearnat
Sennerae

and scholarly adventurers recently turned up a 574 CY paper he'd logged with the Great Library of Lopolla that suggests the Bright Desert might contain the highest concentration of these magical rocks in the Flanaess. Control over such a resource would make Rary mighty (and rich) beyond belief.

But in the Bright Desert, all is not yet lost. Although warriors of many native tribes have joined Rary's massive army in the years since his arrival, a few tribes still resist. None stand so bitterly opposed to the Traitor's machinations as the hueleneaer (a race of desert dwelling centaurs). A fierce and proud people, they yet war with the outlanders, for in Rary they recognize the countenance of evil and ambition personified. Their guerrilla tactics have stained the shifting sands with the lifeblood of hundreds of Robilar's soldiers and their constant raiding continues to tie down and harass the empire's forces. A steady stream of adventurers also now trickles into the region, beguiled by tales of high adventure and the near-limitless wealth said to lie discarded in ancient Sulm's abandoned cities.

Flora, Fauna, and Climate

Squatting at the near-center of the Flanaess and bounded on all sides by arid, windswept hills or tumultuous, treacherous waters, the Bright Lands are all but isolated from the surrounding civilized nations.

Two passes cut through the torturous ridges of the Abbor-Alz, allowing a trickle of travelers and trade to pass into the desert fastness. Flan tribes existing in a state little better than barbarism have dwelt amongst the ravines for millennia, jealously guarding their high villages and sacred places. Manticores, wyverns, leucrotta, lamia, mountain tigers, ogres, hill giants, and trolls all infest the broken landscape of the inner hills. Bandits, criminals, and deserters have also found sanctuary within the uplands and, like the more monstrous inhabitants, prey upon any who enter their domain.

Travelers approaching by sea must contend with fierce seasonal storms, Pomarji pirates, and sea monsters lurking beneath the warm, turbulent waters of the Gearnat. No known safe, sheltered anchorages exist upon the treacherous Bright Coast and no sane sailor willingly anchors here. The last two years have witnessed an increase in the number of vessels attacked along the coast by an as-yet-unidentified agency that appears not to care under what flag a vessel sails. Merchantmen, warships, and pirates have all fallen to this malign entity. Attempts by several individuals and states to uncover the perpetrator of these attacks have so far met with failure.

The bulk of the Bright Desert is a desolate, waterless wasteland seemingly composed of endless ranks of wide, ever-shifting crescent-shaped dunes. Rainfall here is rare; sandstorms frequently scour the interior, sometimes lasting for days at a time. A handful of oases, most jealously guarded by Rary's forces, are scattered throughout the region. During the summer, temperatures soar far above 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and plunge at night to near freezing.

Few creatures have the abilities to survive deep in the desert and those that do are uniformly deadly. Giant ant lions, poisonous snakes, fire toads, giant scorpions, the fearsome dune stalkers, and feral manscorpions all dwell in the deep desert. The more benign brightly colored insect-like pernicons, prized by nomads, hueleneaer, and travellers alike for their water-divining abilities, also haunt the inner reaches of this land. What little plant life exists here is limited to a few date palms, attendant shrubbery found around oases, and the occasional lone cacti, a few of which are thought to be able to drain moisture from living creatures straying too close.

The desert's coastal reaches are more temperate in nature, cooled by sea breezes and watered by spring and autumnal storms that batter the coast. The dusty, sandy soil acts as a boon to the vegetation that is more predominant here than in the interior. After heavy rainfall the desert explodes with color. Wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs bloom prodigiously for several weeks before returning to dormancy. Nomads have found many uses for these plants. They weave the fibrous deep-questing roots of the yellowthorn into hemp-like rope, whilst the carefully harvested pollen of many other flowers is crushed and mixed to produce their sacred ochre. Amongst the nomads the small shrunken melons found growing near oases and along the few rivulets crossing this harsh landscape are a great delicacy; crushed and boiled they made a thick, bitter and pungent jam.

Stands of withered thorn-laden bushes also grow here along with the occasional desiccated, forlorn pine tree. Undeniably ancient, some struggle to sixty feet in height and boast a high-set spherical crown of pale green needles. Their trunks are often S-shaped as if bowed by savage winds and are wreathed in thick, deeply furrowed greyish-silvery bark reputed to have healing properties. The druids of the Flan tribes ascribe great spiritual power and significance to these trees, believing them to be Oerthly manifestations of the Shalm's powers. Harming such a tree is a mortal sin amongst them.

In similar fashion the desert's northern regions are more temperate in nature than its inner reaches. Sheltered somewhat by the uplands of the Abbor-Alz and watered by periodic cloudbursts falling over the range's dusty peaks, this narrow tract of arid land supports flora and fauna similar to that along the coast. The shadowy canyons and ravines of this rocky land offer respite from the murderous sun but weave a torturous course across the blasted landscape. Caves abound here, although few are occupied. This swath of land quickly gives way to dunes unlike any found elsewhere within the Bright. The complex underlying local topography and convoluted wind patterns combine to form a deep zone of lofty steep-sided star-shaped dunes. Higher than the squat dunes of the interior and in places prone to collapse, these three-legged dunes reach heights of over two hundred feet.

In the north and west of the desert, the sand is white. It is from these sands, composed of pulverized granules of glassy quartz, that the desert derives its name, for the sun's light transforms the dunes into a shimmering sea of dazzling white. Prolonged exposure to the glare of the sands produces a condition known as "bright blindness," which though normally temporary, can in severe cases lead to permanent blindness (see sidebar). Nomads and centaurs that travel these regions generally do so by night, protecting their eyes with veils of fine cloths if they must travel by day.

Trade and Travel

Trade in the Bright is limited. A complete absence of highways through the region coupled with the small number of settlements and the ever-present dangers of desert predators dissuade many merchants from journeying here. The market of Ul Bakak is one of the few commerce centers of note. Trade flows sporadically from two main sources—the Duchy of Urnst and Hardby. Weapons are in great demand now as is wood required for the construction of the nomads' bows. In return, the nomads trade stone statuettes carved by skilled craftsmen and polished by the desert winds. Sturdy ponies can be had for trade in the market of Ul Bakak, as can nearly worthless artifacts of long-fallen Sulm or Itar, mere hints at the treasure to be found in the desert's interior. Some less moralistic nomads hire themselves out as guides to explorers intent on locating the countless treasures of the Bright.

Travel through the Bright Desert is fraught with peril. One of the chief dangers is the climate. Desert travellers are exposed to Heat Dangers (described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 86), having to make a Heat Danger check every hour. Travel during the summer months, or through the deep desert, is particularly hazardous, necessitating a Heat Danger check every ten minutes.

Peoples of the Great Sand-Sea

Unaffected by the deviltry that wrought Sulm's end, her subjugated peoples, enemies, and the hueleneaer returned to their itinerant ways.

The most numerous of the desert peoples are the nomads. Predominately of unblemished Flan lineage, the warrior-nomads who dwell in the Bright Lands are a surly, violent, honor-driven folk famed for their incessant inter-tribal warfare, superstitious beliefs, and disdain of outsiders. A strongly patriarchal society, among them strength—be it spiritual or temporal—is the only source of power. Speakers of Ancient Flan, few know any of the Common tongue, deeming it beneath them.

The stocky, bandy-legged Bright Desert Flan exhibit uniformly tanned skin, lanky straight hair ranging from brown to black, and dark eyes. Their dress typically consists of dark-colored lightweight flowing robes worn over simple

Bright Blindness

Those who travel the white sands of the Bright Desert at day without adequate eye protection risk bright blindness, a condition unique to the region. At first, an afflicted individual's vision becomes indistinct, muddled by colored flashes and indistinct shapes. Later, the eyes begin to ache, becoming inflamed before the victim loses his vision for a number of days. Prolonged exposure can lead to permanent blindness.

Anyone travelling the white sands without protection must make a Constitution check (DC 15) every four hours of travel. The DC of subsequent checks throughout the day increases cumulatively by one with each check. Failure means the character is temporarily blinded for 1d4 days.

Characters suffering from bright blindness should also make these additional checks unless they have been completely blindfolded. If a character suffering from bright blindness fails a subsequent Constitution check, his eyes are damaged beyond repair, rendering him permanently blind.

A successful Heal check (DC 15) and the complete blindfolding of the afflicted character's eyes halves the duration of the temporary blindness. *Remove blindness* removes both temporary and permanent bright blindness instantly.

buckskin garments. When going into battle or mourning, the desert folk daub sacred symbols on their faces with sacred ochre, which they believe imparts strength to the wearer. They prize ornamentation; bone or brass headbands decorated with brightly colored beads attract especial attention from them and are highly valued.

A simple folk who eschew most forms of magic, the desert folk worship the spirits of earth, air, and water. Chief amongst their pantheon are Beory, the Oerth Mother, and her lord, Obad-Hai (the Shalm), known also to them as Lord of Wild Places. Above all they fear Nerull, for to them he is death incarnate; some even denounce Rary as the Reaper's emissary. Some few venerate Pelor, invoking him as a protective power against the pervasive evil of Nerull, or seek to improve their lot through the worship of Vathris in his original guise as patron of ingenuity and progress.

Arcane ability among them is largely unknown and brutally suppressed when discovered. The larger tribes, however, maintain a handful of druids (or *brajal*, as they are known) who derive their powers from the Lord of the Wild. Almost exclusively female, *brajals* act as seers, healers, and advisors. It is a measure of status amongst the chieftains to maintain a large group of such women. They live apart from the rest of the tribe and their lives are sacrosanct. These women are the tribe's spiritual link to the past and are believed to be able to commune with tribal ancestors.

Warriors garbed in sand-scarred leather armor bearing lance, scimitar, and short bow, frequently harass outlanders traveling through the desert. The Bright, unlike other deserts in the Far West, boasts no camels, so natives have domesticated a hardy breed of horse for locomotion (and, occasionally, milk and meat). Some of the greatest horsemen of the central Flanaess come from the Bright, where many children are literally born on the back of a sturdy pony.

A few tribes are of Suel descent and speak only the ancient language of the Imperium. A thousand years ago, several large bands of Suel, fleeing the destruction of their empire, forced a passage through the Abbor-Alz in a fruitless search for a bountiful land spoken of in Flan legends. By the time their folly was revealed they had not the strength to win free and were trapped by vengeful native tribes. Now dangerously inbred, they are reviled and distrusted by their Flan brethren and are slowly being hunted into extinction. Foremost amongst them are the Tareg who, from the ancient Suel fortress of Ghazal, control Hardby Pass, exacting a heavy toll on all who pass through. Led by the sorcerer **Kekravil** [LE Suel male Sor11/Clr5—Llerg] a swarthy, bald-headed, obnoxious man, these folk cling to fragments of their ancient heritage, worshipping Llerg above all others. In this harsh (but starkly beautiful) environment they have forgotten most other deities of note, although some few still revere Phyton.

Bright Desert Suel possess deeply tanned (sometimes burned) skin, which they protect with light cloth robes and hoods. Most have red or blond hair, which they wear closely cropped beneath leather coifs. Warriors proclaim their tribal allegiance by wearing cleverly crafted brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue or black ornamental stones. A Bright Desert Suel's broach is his honor, and will never willingly be surrendered.

The Hueleneaer

A dwindling people, the centaurs yet lingering in the Bright Lands are the final inheritors of a long and glorious past. The progeny of mercenary warriors who once guarded the sorcerer-kings of Sulm, they are a proud and noble race that still sings the songs of their past, recalling the folly of those who venerate fell powers. Strongly good-aligned in nature, they had all but abandoned their former allies by the time Shattados donned Tharizdun's "gift." The intelligent, cultured hueleneaer, rich in the lore of elder days, still remember where many of Sulm's ruins lie hidden.

Despite their culture, hueleneaer can be savage and merciless when aroused. Although smaller than their plains-dwelling cousins, the desert centaurs are more muscular and hardy than their kin, making them expert warriors and scouts. They hate manscorpions above all the menaces of the Bright; tribes occasionally unite to speed through the desert, slaying all such creatures they find.

Although in their historical twilight, strength and might still lurks within the hueleneaer. Since 589 CY, when a prominent chief was slain by unknown assailants, they have waged a bitter guerrilla war against Rary's forces. Champions amongst them still bear carefully preserved Sulmish blades and armor, gifted to their ancestors when they served as honored mercenaries in the Sulmish hosts. Today, these ancient treasures have been brought forth once more and are wielded to terrible effect against the followers of Rary and Robilar.

After last year's pitched battle at Gai Hur, centaur chiefs beat the sacred drum and passed the blood-red battle lance, summoning the tribes to war. The centaurs now prepare as a unified people for what could be their final crusade against the legacy of the evil that sundered their homeland centuries ago.

Angeanali [NG desert centaur male Bar4/Rgr8], a hot-blooded young chief, is one of the most fervent proponents of war. He seeks to carry the battle to Robilar at every opportunity and dreams of defeating the infamous Lord of Greyhawk in single combat. A small faction primarily composed of older centaurs stands against him, led by the astute and cautious **Kethharon** [NG desert centaur male Clr9—Skerrit], counsels patience in their struggle. Many young warriors accuse Kethharon and his followers of cowardice, not understanding that their stance almost certainly spells the complete destruction of their culture. Only the intercession of **Mailannaaethus** [N desert centaur male Brd11], a brave warrior renown for his mastery of the hueleneaer legends, has thus far averted bloodshed.

The Empire of the Bright Lands

As the Greyhawk Wars drew to a close, the arrival of Rary and his army irrevocably altered the Bright Desert's balance of power. None could stand before their might and the factious politics of the region ensured that no alliance would arise to threaten the fledgling empire. Within months, Rary's forces had swelled to include a clan of norkers and several tribes of desert nomads defeated in battle and offered mercy in exchange for service. Initially Rary claimed only the land surrounding the Brass Hills but in subsequent years his domain has swelled to include most of the region. As the first days of 593 unfold, dissent has been all but crushed amongst the desert tribes. Of the nomads, only a few insignificant clans of Suel still defiantly cling to their independence.

One of the most fervent opponents of the empire was the handsome, well-liked **Tolan Kai** [NG human male Rgr12]. His capture in 591 was a great blow to the free nomads and led to the capitulation of several tribes. Tolan's ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Rary's Tower

Rary's onion-domed tower dominates the northern reaches of the Brass Hills. Since the tower's arrival, Rary's agents (both humans and contract-bound yugoloths) have constructed a sprawling fortress around the structure. The fortress houses the archmage's fanatical Paynim riders, loyal nomads, and obsequious norker infantry. A few adventurers and apprentices of doubtful character also attend Rary here, either assisting in his research or ranging throughout the region locating rare or arcane items for their master.

Rary's fortress is surround by an as-yet-unnamed settlement. No doubt destined to become the capital of the Bright Lands, the town is composed of little more than semi-permanent pavilions and mud-bricked buildings. A few canny individuals have staked their claim to some of the high ground falling within the precincts of the new settlement and some permanent structures are being raised here according to visiting merchants. A vast curtain wall, finally completed in early 593 CY, protects the whole settlement from attack.

Merchant trains arrive here almost daily, bringing food, water, and other trade goods. The caravans also bring news of the outside world, making their arrival very popular with both the rank-and-file and with Rary's more powerful lieutenants.

Rary's Paynim riders, led by the well-travelled and fiendishly handsome **Kanir Chafr** [LE Baklunish male

Destroying the Scorpion Crown

Rulers and advisors across the central Flanaess debate the meaning of Rary's turn to evil and the reason for his flight to the Bright Desert. A discovery in 592 CY of a pair of torn and burned bodies in the norther Abbor-Alz may shed some light on the Traitor's plotting. One of the unfortunates carried a collection of writings purporting to be the spellbook and journal of one He Chak, a paynim apprentice who had served Rary for more than 20 years prior to his disappearance during the Greyhawk Wars.

The treatise relates how He Chak, while serving Rary in Lopolla, fell in love with Kaya, an enslaved Wolf Nomad woman. According to the journal, Kaya persuaded her lover to flee after he overheard a conversation between Rary and Robilar, the substance of which dealt with Rary's desire to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. Rary also revealed that such an act would shatter the curse's grasp on the region, allowing the land to gradually revert to its original state. The veracity of He Chak's writings cannot be ascertained, however, as attempts to return him to life have failed. Perhaps even in death he fears the Traitor's wrath.

Bar6/Rgr3], enforce their lord's will within the settlement. One of Rary's chief apprentices, **Eliazir Razeem Aza'mut of the Muddled Tongue** [N Baklunish male Wiz14], has a small tower here, but is frequently away on diplomatic missions. The half-Paynim bastard son of a Lopollan spice merchant learned at Rary's feet as an apprentice and is believed to have spent time on other planes, where he was somehow changed, his mind addled by the experience. Aza'mut earned his epithet thanks to his richly accented Baklunish voice and his role as emissary of the Bright Lands to the courts of the Flanaess. In recent years, Aza'mut has visited Hardby, Safeton (where he was well received by Turin Deathstalker), Narwell, Onnwal, and Ahlissa.

Military Forces of the Empire

The bulk of Rary's military strength wanders the Brass Hills region or garrisons at Kalki's Leap or Fort Whiterock. Patrols of nomadic horsemen or norkers range far across the sands, seeking out and destroying desert marauders. Rary's forces, under the iron leadership of Robilar, have been forged into a cohesive force capable of meeting and destroying any remaining threats to the archmage's position. The core of these forces, Robilar's personal guardsmen and Rary's fanatically loyal Paynim horsemen, possess excellent training, equipment, and morale. The Tukim tribe, under the command of the canny **Geratyr** [NE Flan male Bar2/Ftr4], number more than 1,500 lances. Pre-eminent amongst the Tukim is **Halan Jeteri** [CN Flan male Bar7/Ftr2], a charismatic hero famed for slaying a dune stalker single-handedly with naught but a broken lance. Other nomad contingents muster another thousand or so troops.

Innumerable norkers and a few contingents of specialist mercenary troops further swell Rary's forces. One of the most infamous of Rary's servants is **Teraeanali** [LE desert centaur male Rgr9], a black-hearted exile from his people. An implacable foe and skilled archer, Teraeanali delights in hunting down those in the archmage's disfavor.

Fort Whiterock

Fort Whiterock wards the eastern portions of the Bright Lands. It was from here that Robilar campaigned against the hueleneaer at Gai Hur. Centaurs frequently siege this isolated outpost, which was built over the ruins of an ancient white-walled Sulmish citadel. The seneschal, **Zhora** [NE human female Ftr9], formerly served in Greyhawk City's guard and is a wily tactician. Under her leadership these sporadic attacks have been defeated with little loss. Many pits and ditches litter the surrounding dunes, bearing mute testimony to the near-constant warfare swirling about the fortress.

Whiterock's importance has grown with the expansion of Rary's hegemony into surrounding lands. More than 400 nomads and mercenary crossbowmen garrison the fort, which has been enlarged several times in the past few years. Deep artesian wells provide fresh water and newly hewn subterranean storage vaults render the fortress nearly invulnerable to the centaurs' lackluster sieges.

Kalki's Leap

Rary's main fortress in the southern desert region, Kalki's Leap has been extensively extended and reinforced by Robilar, who uses it as his personal command center. Surrounded on all sides by narrow, steeply walled winding canyons, the inner donjon is further warded by stout granite walls, making the citadel all but impregnable. Many norkers dwell in caves carved high into the surrounding canyon walls, making a surprise assault virtually impossible.

Skilled in the art of ambush and unswervingly loyal to Robilar, a truly exceptional unkempt norker named **Grish** [CE norker female Rog4/Bar2] organizes Robilar's outer defenses. Grish's loyalty to Robilar is the subject of much jesting amongst the Paynims, who coarsely suggest (with no proof whatsoever) that the two may be in love. The matter is the source of some considerable friction between the Paynims and Robilar's highly trained personal retinue; blood has been shed twice over the matter.

From here Robilar launched his southern campaigns, which he successfully completed by the close of 589. When the former Lord of Greyhawk is not in residence, the ill-tempered **Chukai** [N Baklunish human male Ftr10] and **Morik** [NE Oeridian/Suel male Ftr5] command the fortress. One of Rary's most trusted Paynims, Chukai was the fort's original commander. He now spends much of his time reporting Robilar's moods and actions to his secret master, Rary. Morik is an exceptional administrator and the garrison quartermaster. Severely injured in the initial campaigns, his left leg is gone below the knee. Robilar trusts Morik implicitly, and the two work continuously to soften Chukai's influence over the rest of the garrison.

Places of Interest

Nomadic villages, a scattered handful of oases, several landmarks, and the few remaining sand-shrouded ruins of once mighty Sulm all lie within the Bright Lands. Primitive villages such as Ul Bakak, Histak, and Kalundi act as focal points for the civilization that maintains a precarious toehold here, while other less permanent settlements can be found huddled around oases and along the few seasonal rivulets. Of the permanent settlements located in the Bright, only Ul Bakak yet maintains a precarious neutrality.

Oases

The Bright Lands boast four well-known oases.

Var is the southernmost and largest of the oases; the waters here have never failed. Hundreds of nomads gather water here each day and a small garrison of Rary's troops linger here, maintaining discipline between the normally factious nomads.

Kolum was oft beset by manscorpions until Rary's forces annihilated a nest of these creatures lurking in nearby ruins. This skirmish cemented the willing loyalty of several important Flan tribal leaders, who now place their warriors at Rary's disposal. A mixture of nomads and norkers make up the Kolum garrison.

Tulwar oasis is the final link in the trade route between Ul Bakak and the desert interior. After a whirlwind assault by a joint force of nomads and hueleneaer decimated the garrison in 588, Rary ordered his yugoloth allies to construct a small fort here. The garrison, members of the fanatically loyal Tukim tribe, send out strong patrols of horsemen to scour the surrounding dunes.

Shembai is the only major waterhole not totally dominated by Rary. Experiments carried out by a puissant Sulmish wizard centuries ago caused a small rift between Oerth and the Abyss to form here. At nightfall the rift opens, expelling several demons that despoil the area, attacking any travelers they find. The lucky are slain; others are carried off to the Abyss. Rary lost several patrols here before deeming control of the oasis unnecessary, placing semi-permanent pickets about Shembai to observe and control access to the waterhole.

Ul Bakak

For the last decade or so, Ul Bakak has repeatedly professed its neutrality in the conflicts wracking the region. Rary's domination of the Bright now all but invalidates this neutrality, but the archmage allows Ul Bakak its fantasy because of the trade it attracts. Nomads from throughout the desert come to Ul Bakak to trade with unscrupulous caravan masters from Hardby. Since the village stands on sacred ground, no nomads will fight here—even Abbor-Alz barbarians and the reviled Suel can walk the market of Ul Bakak without fear.

Little more than a permanent collection of tents and mud-bricked dwellings, Ul Bakak stands between the folds of three hills. A well-guarded stream bubbles to the surface at the base of these hills, allowing the inhabitants to cultivate a small parcel of land and to maintain several herds of goats. Assisted by a ragtag band of desert warriors, the dour-faced and single-minded **Kumhaik** [N Flan male Ftr12] maintains order here. A veteran of over thirty years of skirmishing and survival in the deep-desert, Kumhaik is forthright and honest. The grizzled warrior will not risk the neutrality of Ul Bakak for any cause, no matter how just, and does not suffer fools lightly. He is famed for his equestrian skills and for his patience; desert tales relate how he once tracked a renegade merchant guilty of striking a rival in the marketplace for over two weeks before capturing and punishing him.

The Brass Hills

The jagged peaks of the Brass Hills, situated at the very center of the Bright Desert, afford superlative views of the surrounding landscape. Now wholly pacified by Rary's forces, the hills swarm with his minions. Some of the region's most interesting locales include:

Tower of the Sands. A small low-lying spur of these hills runs southward toward the Bright Coast, disappearing under the sands within miles of the coastline. At the very tip of this spur, hidden in a sand-choked valley, stands a single tower, the upper portions of which have recently been uncovered. A few travellers, who bestowed upon the tower its rather evocative and romantic name, have glimpsed this place from a distance, but harassment by norkers and other desert denizens precluded their investigations of the place.

The tower's origins remain a mystery, although the hueleneaer remember tales, older even than Sulm, imbuing the tower with an aura of preternatural menace. They hold the Brass Hills sacred and will not travel here. Despite this, groups of travelers who recently visited the region report encountering a lone centaur who professed to be on some kind of holy quest. The centaur, **Argaveno** [LN desert centaur male], offered several of these groups succor, leading them without incident past several large bands of patrolling norkers. Rumors report the destruction of several norker patrols by Argaveno and his charges, and Lord Robilar himself is said to be taking an interest in the situation.

The Zochal. In the southern fringes of the hills, in the midst of a dense network of jagged hills and deep crevasses, stand the scorched and blackened remains of a shattered plateau. A yawning crater now stands in the center of the plateau, where once stood a rectangular building of obviously arcane origin known as the Zochal by scholars of the Ur-Flan. What caused the explosion is unknown, although many observers blame Rary and his yugoloth allies. The plateau stands north of Kalki's Leap, which has seen increased activity of late.

The Shrouded Citadel. Adventurers from Ul Bakak to the Wild Coast whisper of a newly discovered fortification deep in the hills constructed by Rary to incarcerate a prisoner of great value. No one knows the prisoner's identity, but the swarms of norkers, Paynims, and hired adventurer-mercenaries keeping away the inquisitive illustrate the prisoner's import. Rary himself visited the citadel several times in the closing days of 592 CY, leading many to assume the place plays some central role in his schemes.

Dagger Rock

Thrusting skyward, the deformed pinnacle of cracked granite known as Dagger Rock dominates the land for miles around. Travelers have used the landmark as a way marker for centuries. The pinnacle itself stands at the center of a shattered landscape. A great expanse of broken and shattered rocks litters the structure's base, making footing treacherous and travel by mount impossible. Thus, while travelers and explorers alike know of and have seen Dagger Rock from a distance, relatively few have actually approached the formation.

The ancient Suel, although they did not linger here long, used this place for a time as a refuge from their Flan

assailants, calling it Kuranot. The few brave individuals who have since approached report the crumbling remains of a cliff-top fortress carved into the outcrop's zenith. Most assume that the Suel cut or discovered passages within the rock that ultimately lead to its summit, but the secret entrances to such thoroughfares are now long forgotten.

A blue dragon named Voltarmarun laired here in recent decades until slain by an incensed Robilar in 590 CY. The fate of Voltarmarun's hoard remains mysterious; since word of the warrior's brave exploits reached civilized lands, several small groups of adventurers have slipped into the desert via the Knife Edge Pass, seeking the treasure. Their ultimate fates likewise remain unknown.

The Uplands of Unath

This small range of hills, located to the north of Utaa, was once home to a small colony of dwur allied to their brethren dwelling in the Abbor-Alz. Natural and dwur-constructed passages burrowed deep under the desert, linking the two groups in a complex web of corridors, galleries, and chambers. No one knows the ultimate fate of the Unath dwur, though they most assuredly warred with the expansionist Sulmites. Either they fell here defending their clanholds, made a final stand with their eastern cousins, or migrated elsewhere. The remains of their ill-fated civilization still dot the sharp, jagged peaks of this range. In many places their way markers are still visible, some still bearing the kingdom's device—two crossed battleaxes surmounted by a blazing sun.

To the south, near the ruins of Utaa, their strongholds stand empty but in the north many teem with clans of norkers or jermaline. The jermaline are fiercely independent creatures that resist the encroachment of the norkers, who for the most part ally themselves to the Empire of the Bright Lands. Preying on both groups, small bands of trolls dwell in and around some of these dwur settlements. Able to change their skin color to surprise foes, the depredations of this subspecies of common troll effectively culls the numbers of other humanoids.

The deep tunnels and passages connect to the Underdark in several places. Powerful adventurers traversing this shadowy world report witnessing the aftermath of several fierce engagements between groups of beholders and duergar. A few explorers also speak of a great underground river flowing swiftly southward toward the Gearnat, perhaps acting as a natural drain to the Gnatmarsh.

Much of the warfare that rages here is subterranean in nature and thus the few hardy nomadic tribes who graze their livestock in the hills are mainly untroubled by the goblinoids of the interior. A small pride of dragonnes led by a huge male, however, dwells in the range's central massif, occasionally issuing forth to prey on the nomad's herds.

Gai Hur

Named "Sky-Peak" in ancient Flan, this roughly hewn monstrous stone pinnacle is a vital landmark for those travelling the Bright's eastern reaches. The hueleneaer once gathered here in moot twice annually, until one such meeting ended in tragedy in 592. Surprised and encircled by a strong force of nomads and norkers, the gathered centaurs were convinced to parley with their enemies. After the failure of several hours of negotiation with Lord Robilar (who hoped to bring them peaceably into the empire) ended in stalemate, the two sides set to fighting. Several hundred centaurs died attempting to break free of Robilar's army. Those deaths and the reported presence of several unnatural yugoloths on the battlefield strengthened the centaurs' resolve to resist Rary and his machinations.

Shards of Forgotten Kingdoms

The roots of Sulm's civilization are lost in pre-history; of them little is known. Rexidos, however, in his *A Chronicle of the Flan People*, hypothesizes that Sulm's original founders were survivors of an even older Flan kingdom destroyed in a series of conflicts of which the histories are ignorant.

The doom that engulfed Sulm annihilated the population and poisoned the land but failed to completely obliterate the fallen kingdom. In many places ancient ruins still thrust forlornly above the dune sea. Much of Sulm's riches and lore yet lie in the sand-drowned ruins of this once great land, their inaccessibility and many and potent guardians thwarting most attempts to retrieve them. Chief amongst these are the degenerate manscorpions. Far more rarely encountered are the dune stalkers. Tall, naked, hard-skinned humanoids feared for their ability to slay opponents with a single kiss, wild theories abound regarding their origins. Some believe they are native to the Elemental Plane of Earth while others assert they are the twisted personification of Sulm's most evil peoples. A few nomadic sorcerers and wizards have learned to bind dune stalkers to their service, using them to slay rivals or to retrieve lost items of power.

In other places hitherto unknown ruins are exposed and then reburied at the whim of fierce storms sweeping across the desolate landscape. Finally, dust storms can strike with barely a moment's notice, interring would-be explorers beneath the desert's shifting sands.

Utaa

The former capital of Sulm lies in the very shadow of the hills that ward its northern approaches. The city was founded on and about a great plateau thrusting up from the desert floor. Today, only the center of Utaa yet stands above the encroaching sands. Bare, sun-cracked rock surrounds the city for miles, as if the gods themselves have striven to bury Utaa in an attempt to contain the evil that lurks within. The outer precincts of the city are almost completely hidden beneath the encroaching sands; only the remains of occasional watch towers, normally swarming with scorpions and many-tentacled tentamorts, yet breach the surface. The dunes here are star-shaped and very high, some soaring over one hundred

feet in height. Strong, unpredictable winds complicate matters for explorers, although windstorms occasionally uncover a long-submerged portion of the city, allowing further exploration.

No known oases or rivulets exist within fifty miles of these forsaken ruins, making exploration particularly arduous. Nothing grows within the city's boundaries and rain never falls here.

The plateau itself is immense, towering above the surrounding lands. Many watchtowers, noble residences, and minor temples have been carved into its sides. Persistent rumors amongst the nomads speak of a convoluted network of steep, narrow, and lightless tunnels piercing the plateau itself, reaching downward to the communal burial sites of Utaa's common folk. Below even the burial chambers run the city's sewers, which still resist the sand's onslaught. It is through these that pockets of the lower city can be explored.

The center of Utaa can be reached by climbing one of three paved highways warded by a series of strongpoints that snake up the plateau's steep sides. Atop the plateau stands the administrative and spiritual center of Sulm. Here, once-sumptuous palaces, lofty castles, ostentatious temples, and soaring monuments still stand. Weathered by the near-constant winds that plague the plateau, surviving monuments depict a race of heroically posed cruel-faced Flan. The inner city is infested with all manner of incorporeal undead that effectively deal with most interlopers.

Unaagh

Once Sulm's most sacred site, the location of this vast necropolis is well known to the desert's inhabitants. Originally a place of great beauty and tranquillity, Unaagh is now a travesty of its former self. Laid out in a great grid, Unaagh was composed of many rows of mausoleums interspaced with gardens, tranquil lakes, and shrines dedicated to the memory of the departed. In the very center of the necropolis arose a black-stoned ziggurat from which the whole necropolis was visible. Now all lies in ruins, and what beauty once existed here has been eradicated by the harsh elements that constantly work to reduce Unaagh to naught but a memory.

Here, interred in many-tiered mausoleums, lay Sulm's elite. Now the ruins teem with a vast legion of undead commanded by **Drokkas** [LE lich male Wiz18] a one-time rival of Shattados. Mercifully, these undead seem bound here by some unknown agency and are unable to leave this place, crumbling to dust if they attempt to do so.

Rary's forces have made several attempts to explore these ruins, most ending in disaster. In 591 CY, Rary himself came here and bested the dark lord of Unaagh in a magical duel of epic proportions. Much of the black ziggurat was destroyed in the magical conflagration that also consumed many lesser undead. Since Rary's exploration of the ruins, observers have reported a great pall of black smoke hanging motionless over the necropolis, resting the attempts of even the strongest winds to dissipate it.

Darkbridge Temple

Shunned by all, this accursed place is at the center of a growing number of disappearances over the last decade. No sane traveler comes within sight of this squat, festering ruin. Once a Sulmish site dedicated to the reverence of forbidden gods, **Othimvoar** [CE young adult shadow dragon male] now lairs here. Corrupted by dark dreams of ancient glories and glittering treasures Othimvoar, nicknamed "Smoke" by those few who have glimpsed him, was lured here a decade ago from his lair in the Abbor-Alz.

Originally built atop a high hill at the intersection of two valleys and ringed by three great walls that hold the advancing sand somewhat at bay, the central temple still stands. Four great gates, ceremonially set at the cardinal points of the compass, pierce the outer wall, which has in places been overwhelmed by the ever-present wind and sand. The inner walls protect many lesser shrines arrayed around the main edifice and are studded with protective towers. Beneath the temple lie mile-deep catacombs containing some of the most sacred and forbidden places of old Sulm. Undead remnants of Sulm's priesthood guard

these sacred places, incessantly warring with a ferocious tribe of jermaline infesting the sepulchers and vaults of this forsaken netherworld.

Plain of Spears

Itar, Sulm's ancient enemy, was crushed on the Plain of Spears in a battle that some say is still fought to this day by the ghosts of those slain long ago. Nothing grows in this bleak and wretched plain, named after the countless man-tall outcroppings of rock in the area. Incessant winds that seem laden with the sorrows of all who fell here gust across the desolate landscape. Determined explorers often return depleted in numbers but bearing ancient weapons imbued with great power. Often they tell of attacks in the dead of night by spirits clad in the trappings of fallen kingdoms and of their companions driven mad by the ceaseless wind.

The Twisted Canyon

Found to the south of the Plain of Spears, where the eastern Abbor-Alz run down into the desert, the Twisted Canyon is barely more than a score of yards wide at any point but reaches depths of up to two hundred feet. Legends of the nomads mark this as the spot that Vathris crawled to after being mortally wounded on the Plain of Spears. They relate how he died here in the very deepest depths of the canyon, cursing the wickedness of the kingdom that had laid him low.

After Sulm's fall, worshippers of Vathris carved an elaborate secret temple complex into the canyon walls. Laid out over five main levels and numerous sub-levels that radiate outward from the central chamber, the temple also includes numerous deep cisterns, allowing its inhabitants, the Qolat Sisterhood, to remain within most of their lives.

The central chamber, known as the Vault of the Faithful, has certain acoustic qualities that allow the barest whisper to be heard at a great distance. The sound of prayer constantly reverberates here, as it has for more than a thousand years. The sisters believe their prayers have the power to revive Vathris, a god whose physical form still bears the seeping wounds of his original destruction. The hero god manifests once or twice a year, wandering the desert in a state of wounded delir-

Adventuring in the Bright

The following LIVING GREYHAWK scenarios take place in the Bright Lands.

URD1-02 *To Save the Scouring Wind*
by Chris Lindsay
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
Whilst in the Abbor-Alz the adventurers encounter a lone centaur seeking aid for his tribe. Traveling to the Bright, the PCs manage to rescue a tribe of desert centaurs from the forces of Rary, but fail to save their shaman, who is slain whilst questing in the spirit world.

URD1-07 *Fools Gold*
by Jonathan Ingram
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
While resting near the Urnst fortress of Seh, the party discovers a treasure map. The map reveals the location of a Bright Desert dervish raiding camp, allowing the adventurers the opportunity to take matters into their own hands.

COR1-08 *The Future's Bright*
by Creighton Broadhurst
Level Range: 1–8 **Status:** Retired
Part One of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Forced to anchor off the Bright Coast to repair their vessel, the adventurers must negotiate with the ghost of Varn Amandis, who allows them to cannibalize the wreck of the *Azure Warden*. But first, they must rescue the *Warden's* only survivor, lost somewhere in the Bright Desert.

URD1-11 *Incident at Kiddeky Crossing*
by Richard Hubbard
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
Working as agents of the Church of St. Cuthbert, the adventurers find themselves in a race against time when they must beat Lord Robilar and his men to the location of the *Chalice of Relief*, a magical cup reputed to cure those who drink from it.

URD2-04 *Bright Prospects*
by Jonathan Ingram
Level Range: 1–10 **Status:** Retired
Adventurers act as bodyguards for Lord Brondar Pontirun when he embarks on a diplomatic mission to woo the Tal'Shaki tribe into an alliance against Rary the Traitor.

COR2-08 *Echo*
by Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Level Range: 1–12 **Status:** Available
Concerned by stories of the resurfacing Isles of Woe, Warnes Starcoat sponsors an expedition into the Brass Hills to explore a site called the Zochal. According to the *Nesser Opuscule*, only surviving fragment of a greater work attributed to Tzunk, the Zochal is an echo point for the planar confluence that infuses the once-lost sunken isles. What does this mean? That is exactly what the Circle of Eight wants you to find out.

COR3-01 *The Hidden Fortress*
by Creighton Broadhurst
Level Range: 4–10 **Status:** Available
Part Two of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Fragments of a doom-laden prophesy, a millennia old map, and the sanity of a man long-rescued compel you to return to the Bright Lands.

ium, violently destroying monsters and ignoble men and stoking the desire for revenge among all he meets. Constantly bleeding from the wound that killed him, Vathris always dies again within days of his resurrection, and the cycle continues anew.

Vathris' faithful dwelled here for almost a thousand years until a great schism split their ranks, polarizing them into two factions. The Qolat Sisterhood (a group of militant warrior-priestesses) now holds the temple and from it fights the defilers of the desert. They are few in number now, barely two score strong, but all are skilled in the arts of war and prayer. **Jerianek Firaen** [LN Flan female Clr9–Vathris/Ftr3], a strongly muscled, righteous woman intent on vanquishing all invaders, leads them. She distrusts anyone not desert born, taking a particularly guarded stance toward westerners. The other faction consists largely of male clerics and dervishes who cling to the Vathris of progress and ingenuity and seek to heal the god's wounds, rather than simply use him as a pawn. They declared the Sisterhood anathema hundreds of years ago and still keep a watch for Qolat sisters outside the protection of their fortress home.

Sennerae

The shattered ruins of Sennerae have lain almost undisturbed since Sulm's forces destroyed the city days after annihilating Itar's forces on the Plain of Spears. Once the capital of Itar, the city was wracked by powerful earthquakes conjured by Ur-Flan mystics in the service of Sulm. Almost the entire city was destroyed. A handful of structures came to rest on the treacherous cliffs created by the earthquakes while the crumbling remains of a few battered walls and watchtowers still precariously cling to the clifftop. The easily accessible parts of the city have long ago been plundered, however much of the wealth of Itar was cast into the warm waters of the Gearnat along with the bulk of the city. Travelers sometimes take shelter in the clifftop ruins, although few possess the resources or bravery to investigate the rest of the city.

Over the years, the relentless action of the sea has eroded and smoothed much of what survived Itar's deathroes until nothing now juts above the waves, even at low tide. Below the waves, much of Sennerae still stands. Cracked temples dedicated to Pelor, Vathris, and Rao have resisted the onslaught of the tides well, as have other lesser structures. Some streets and other buildings also remain, including portions of the royal palace.

Despite the large concentration of sahuagin and other undersea predators in the Sea of Gearnat, the region surrounding Sennerae is lightly inhabited. No doubt the presence of a gargantuan dragon turtle, which has laired here for centuries, is somewhat to thank for this. Few who witness this monster's depredations survive the encounter, although some mariner's tales speak of him. Named Lhamzygax in the journals of Kelsannd, an Ahlissian mage given to undersea exploration, mariners have not encountered the dragon turtle for decades, bringing some to the conclusion that he has finally perished.

The waters off this portion of the coast are uncommonly deep, shrouding Sennerae's ruins in a gloomy half-light. Deep caves pierce the base of the cliff against which the sunken city rests. How far these extend under the desert, and what they contain, is a matter of some conjecture.

What the Heck is a Norker?

Norkers are short, gruff goblinoids who possess a thick segmented hide and long canine teeth. Their hairless skin ranges from reddish brown to dark gray. Most wear only loincloths held up by a belt to which other belonging are tied. Norkers speak a dialect of Goblin. Those with Intelligence scores of 12 or above also speak Orc.

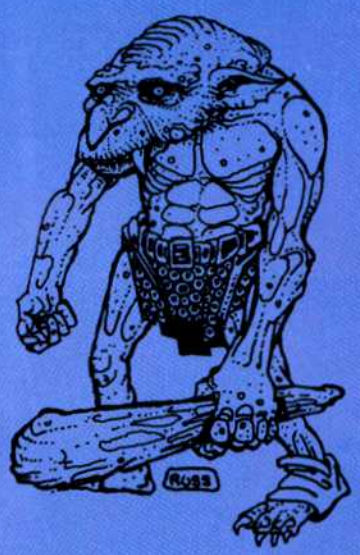
Norkers are tribal, although the leader's influence extends only so far as his reach. They raid and steal from other humanoids, being too lazy to do their own hunting. Norkers generally lair in caves, ruins, or villages taken by conquest. Rare occasions in which two norker tribes meet usually end in bloodshed, with victors claiming the fangs of their slain enemies as battle trophies. Most conflicts end once one side takes the advantage; norkers war with each other to establish dominance, not to wipe each other out.

Norkers sometimes work with hobgoblins, who do their best to curb the creatures' natural chaotic tendencies. Most worship Maglubiyet, god of goblins and hobgoblins. A norker's favorite class is rogue, but norker leaders tend to be fighters. The following stat block represents an average norker.

Norker: CR 1/2; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init: +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Atk +2 melee (1d6, club) or -3 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 ranged (1d6, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3; Alertness.

Possessions: Club, 2 javelins.



Russ Nicholson

Living Greyhawk™

Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

Campaign Director: Stephan Radney-MacFarland • Contributing Reporters: Jason Bulmahn and David Christ

3.5 Edition and Living Greyhawk

Recent months have brought a lot of discussion and speculation regarding the new "3.5" edition of the D&D core rules, set to hit store shelves in July. Many LIVING GREYHAWK players have wondered when and how the campaign will support these new rules. While the campaign administrators have not yet finalized all the details of how to implement the changes, we have been working very hard with the new rules to make any changes as smooth as possible.

We do know that LIVING GREYHAWK will support the new rules. Those rules will not "go live" for the campaign in July, but will be implemented by the end of 2003. We wish to give our players and especially our judges enough time to become familiar with the new rules before we make them official.

Shortly after the new books hit the shelves, we will place a conversion document in the "Files" section of the campaign website (www.living-greyhawk.com). The document will detail what changes must be made to your character, with a deadline for when all changes must go into effect. We realize that not knowing what changes await your characters can be frustrating, but we plan to incorporate the new rules in a manner that causes as little strife to the players as possible. With a positive attitude and a litte understanding from all involved we can make this change as quickly as possible and get back to the fun of playing the game we all love.

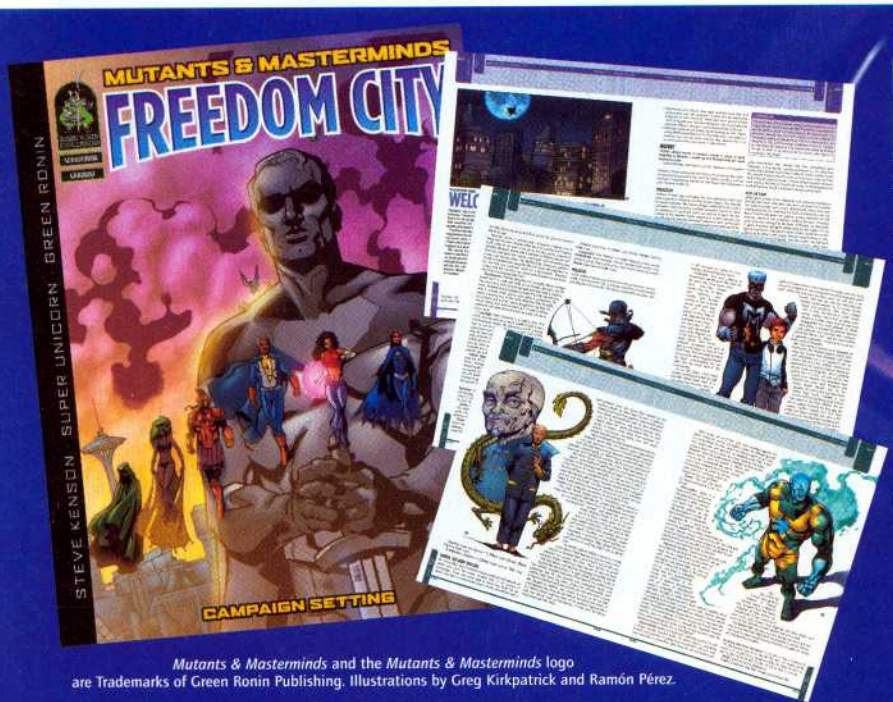
Campaign Policy: Regionals at the "Big" Shows

The RPGA Network designates certain conventions as "spotlight" shows. These shows receive Core Premieres, special events, and other special considerations unavailable to regional shows. As a balancing factor, "spotlight" shows cannot run regional or meta-regional events, which are reserved for smaller local shows. The current "spotlight" shows are: WINTER FANTASY, Origins, Gen Con Midwest, Gen Con West.

New Books, New Spells, New Ways to Die

Got a feat or prestige class from a new Wizards of the Coast product that's just perfect for your character? The list of allowable rules expansions changes twice annually, and is noted in two important campaign documents. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* (LGCS) contains everything a player needs to create and play a character in the campaign. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Administrators Handbook* (LGAH) provides guidelines regarding what rules can and cannot be used in the campaign, and is a resource for the Regional Triads who manage the campaign regionally.

Campaign administrators update both documents every six months (in January and July), adding character options that have come out since the last update once they have been reviewed for campaign compatibility. As always, the current version of the LGCS can be found at www.livinggreyhawk.com. ●



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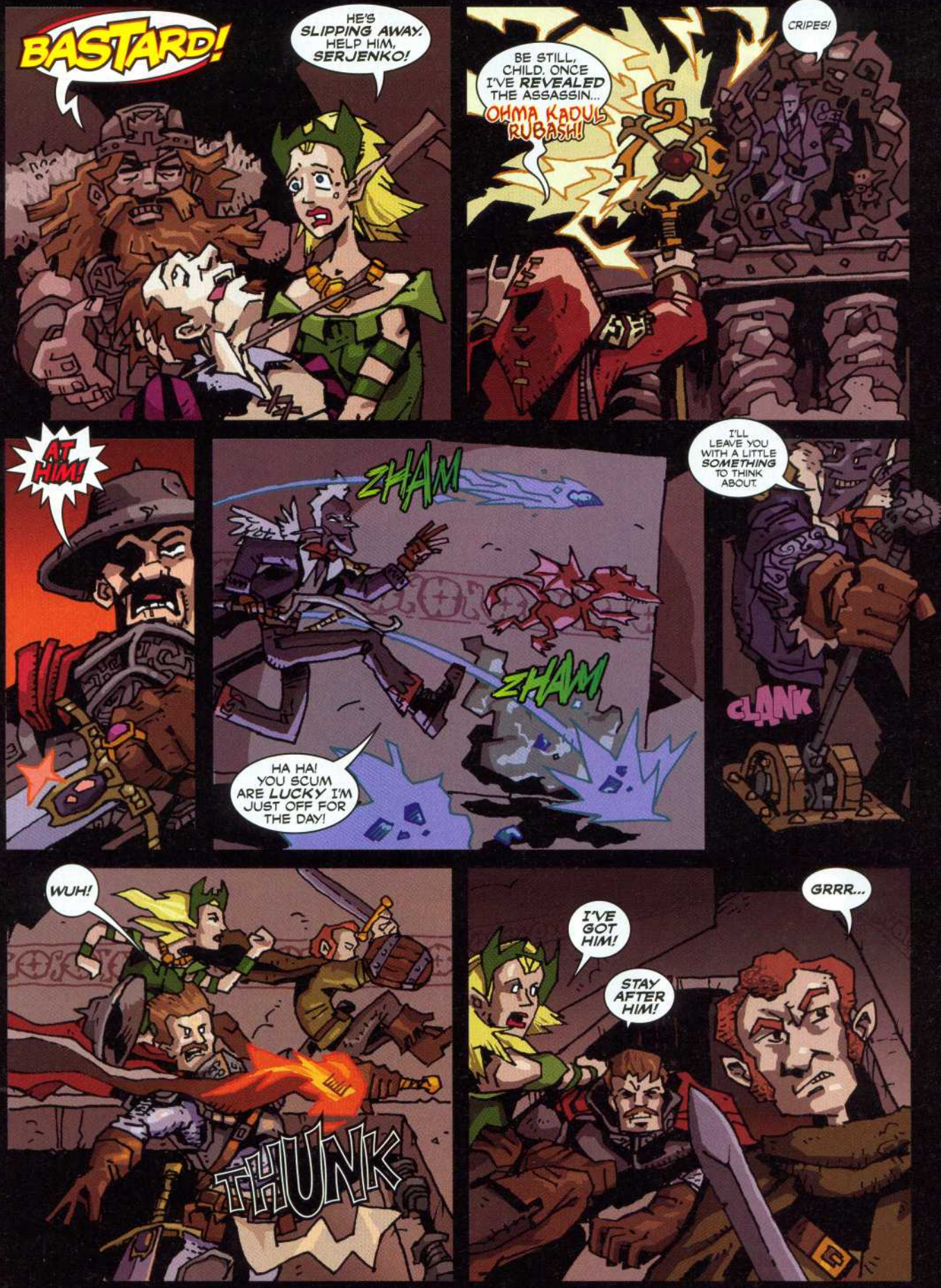
Available wherever quality roleplaying games are sold.

Municipal Police Station
1 square = 5 feet
WEST
Authorized Vehicles Only Beyond This Point
KEY
1) Lobby
2) Front Desk
3) Officer Desks
4) Lieutenant's Office
5) Precinct Captain's Office
6) Firing Range
7) Armory
8) Weapon & Gear Lockers
9) Jail Guard Desk
10) Drunk Tank
11) Group Cell
12) Solitary Cells
13) Dispatch Desk
14) Conference Room
15) Waiting Area
16) Janitor's Closet
17) Computer Mainframe
18) Break Room
19) Lavatories
20) Evidence Archive
21) Storage Room
22) Lineup Waiting Area
23) Lineup Viewing Room
24) Detective Offices
25) Security Desk
26) Interrogation Room
27) Observation Room
28) Motor Pool
29) Fuel Pumps
30) Bus Stop

DOWNER
BY KYLE HUNTER ©02
CRAWL BABY, CRAWL!
STAY TOGETHER AND BE QUIET. SURPRISE IS THE BEST WEAPON WE HAVE AGAINST THE EYE TYRANT!
THERE'S SOMETHING UP AHEAD!
WE'VE BEEN DETECTED!
BUGGER OFF, YOU CRIMINALS!
CAN'T WE GET ANY PEACE DOWN HERE?
THERE'S NO REST FOR THE WICKED, DEMON! I'LL SING YOU A TALE YOU'LL NOT SOON FORGET--
LOOPS, NO!
OOT
TCHEK
HA HA! CRITICAL HIT MUTHA@#$%!! THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR BRINGING A GEE-TAR ON A DUNGEON CRAWL!
NICE ONE, DOWNER!


BASTARD!
HE'S SLIPPING AWAY. HELP HIM, SERJENKO!
BE STILL, CHILD. ONCE I'VE REVEALED THE ASSASSIN...
OHMA KADUL RUBASH!
CRIPES!
AT HIM!
ZHAM
ZHAM
HA HA! YOU SCUM ARE LUCKY I'M JUST OFF FOR THE DAY!
I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.
CLANK
WUH!
THUNK
I'VE GOT HIM!
STAY AFTER HIM!
GRRR...

UH. WHAT A DAY.
CREEAK
BLOODY OVER-BRIGHTERS...
PASSWORD!
GAH!
PASSWORD!
AAAAAAAAHH!
TCHWAP
TCHWAP
TAKE THAT, YA GIT!
:KA...GAFF:
PLINK
MMM-MMMM...
RIDICULOUS! I'VE WORKED HERE OVER 23 YEARS...
AND IT ALL ENDS RIGHT HERE!

SHOW YOURSELF, CUR!
SHING
I THINK NOT, DARK ELF. THE SNIPER HAS BEEN SNIPED!
TAGGET? WHERE DID YOU GO?
DROP THE SWORD OR TAKE A 4D6 SNEAK ATTACK BETWEEN THE EYES!
TAGGET? TAGGET!?
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
DAMMIT! ASTRID, GET OUT! THAT BLOODY DROW'S IN HERE!
GASP!
NICE TRY KNEE-BITER! LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A STANDOFF!
TO BE CONTINUED

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter**. Lettering by **Sean Glenn**. Thanks to **Wendy Johnson**. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**